MARS

9

by Fuyumi Soryo

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9
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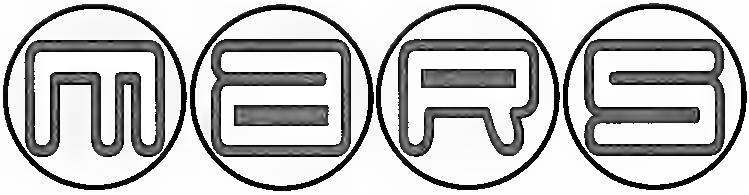

Volume 9

By Fuyumi Soryo

TOKYOPOP®

LOS ANGELES • TOKYO

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DID YOU HEAR? I GUESS KIRA AND REI'S THING IS ON THE ROCKS.
YEAH, YEAH. I HEARD THEY WERE ARGUING IN THE CAFETERIA LAST WEEK.
I THOUGHT THEY WOULD START HAVING TROUBLE SOON!
REI!
IZUMI HAS SOMETHING SHE WANTS TO GIVE YOU!
CAN WE GO TO YOUR CLASS LATER?

LEGEND OF MARS

The story until now...

Kira falls for Rei when she sees him kissing a statue of Mars in the art studio. Meanwhile, Rei finds himself drawn to Kira's sketch of a mother and child. Hoping to put aside the darkness in their hearts, they start dating. However, when Masao shows up, he brings back Kira's shocking past. When Kira tells Rei she was raped by her stepfather in junior high, he takes her to the beach and they vow to deal with the past together—until suddenly her mother gets back together with her stepfather. Kira accepts his apologies and agrees to live with him for the sake of her mother's health. But when Rei finds out, he explodes with anger and gives up on her....

Rei Kashino
A high school student who's into Kira's paintings. His twin brother Sei died recently.

Harumi
Kira's friend. She watches over Kira and Rei's love.

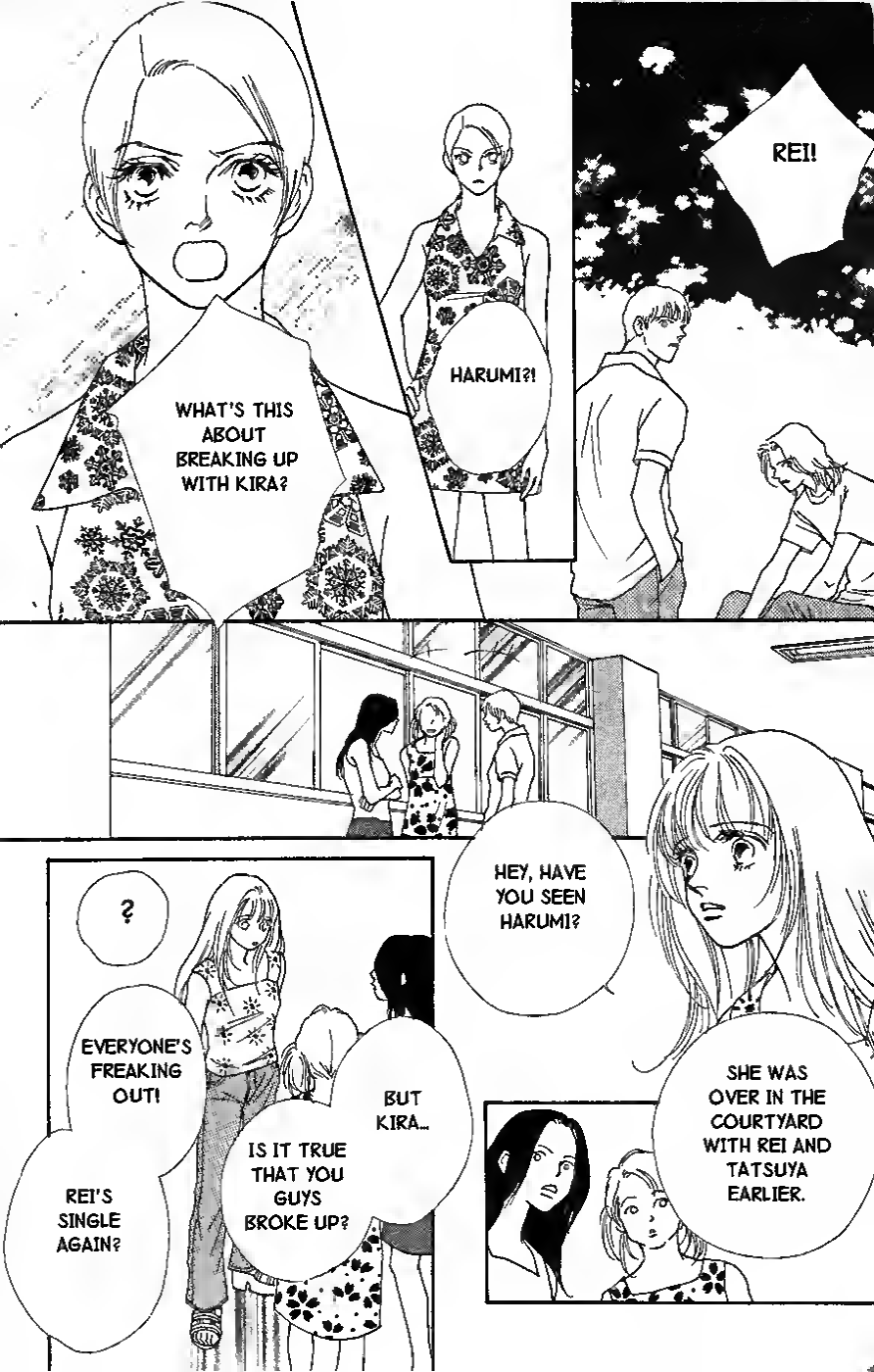
Kira Aso
She won first prize in an art show for her painting of Rei, the guy she loves. Somehow, Masao knows about her secret past.

Manea Kinshima
A new student who is infatuated with Rei. After starting some trouble, he gets expelled.

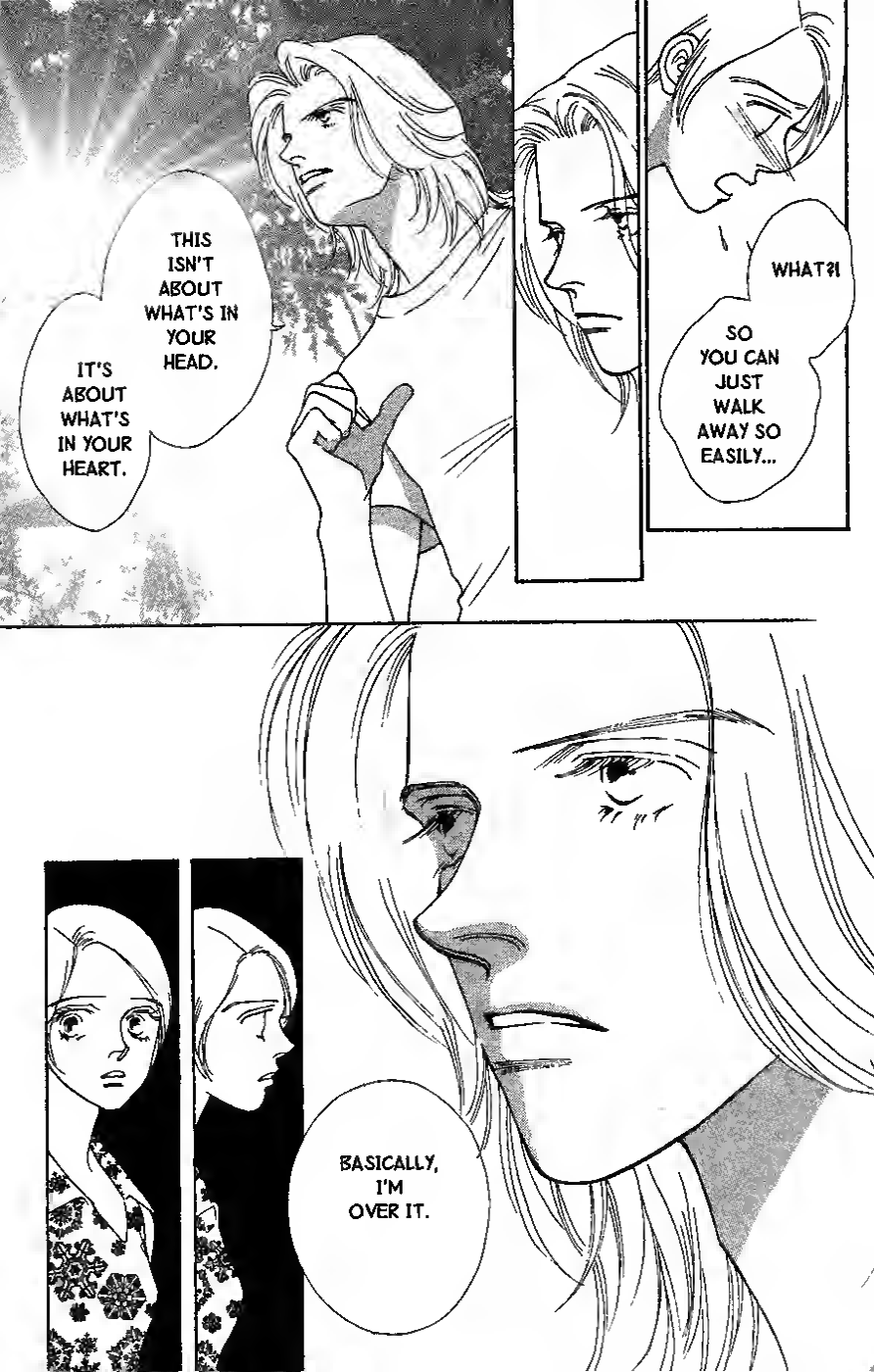
WHO DOES SHE THINK SHE IS?
I CAN'T BELIEVE SHE'S APPROACHING A SENIOR LIKE THAT WHEN SHE'S ONLY A SOPHOMORE.
WHAT'S THAT ABOUT?
DUMB ASS.
IT'S NOT LIKE THAT.
おっと。
HEY, WHAT ARE YOU MAKING SUCH AN INNOCENT YOUNG SOPHOMORE DO?
GOD, REI.
ARE YOU IN SERIOUS CHEAT MODE?
I've never seen anything like it!
Wow!
WHOA!
ARE THESE HOMEMADE COOKIES?
YOU CAN HAVE 'EM IF YOU WANT.

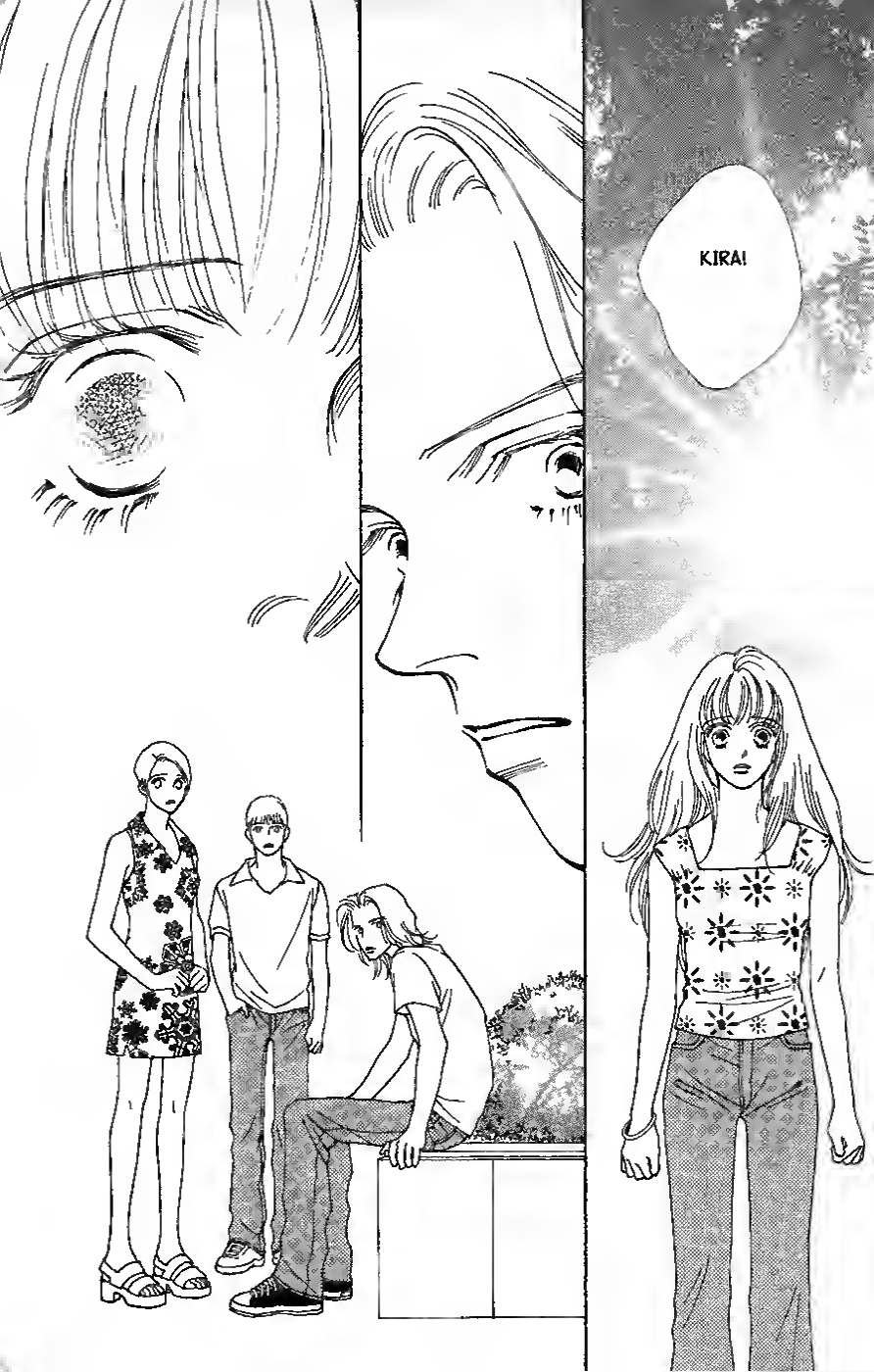
IT DOESN'T MATTER ANYMORE.
I'M SINGLE NOW.
3-A
HEY, HEY, HARUMI!
IS IT TRUE THAT REI AND KIRA BROKE UP?
D CLASS IS GOING CRAZY WITH THE NEWS RIGHT NOW.

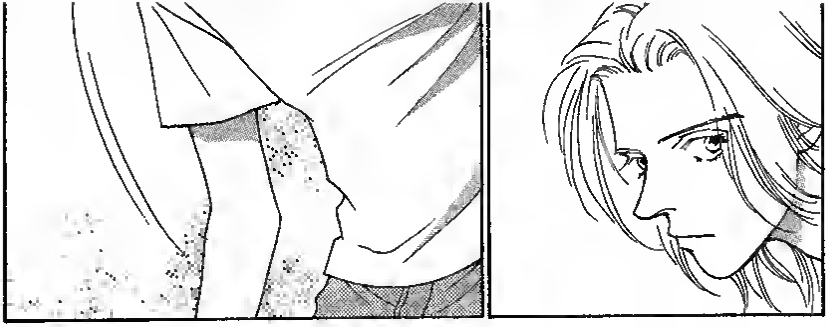
ARE YOU OKAY WITN TNIS?
"ARE YOU OKAY WITN TNIS?"
TNAT'S IT?
IT'S NOT ABOUT ENDING ANYTHING. I'M GIVING UP...
I CAN'T DO ANY-TNING ABOUT IT.
CAN YOU REALLY GIVE UP ON KIRA?
WNAT ELSE CAN I DO?
WE CAN'T GET CLOSER, NO MATTER WNAT WE DO..

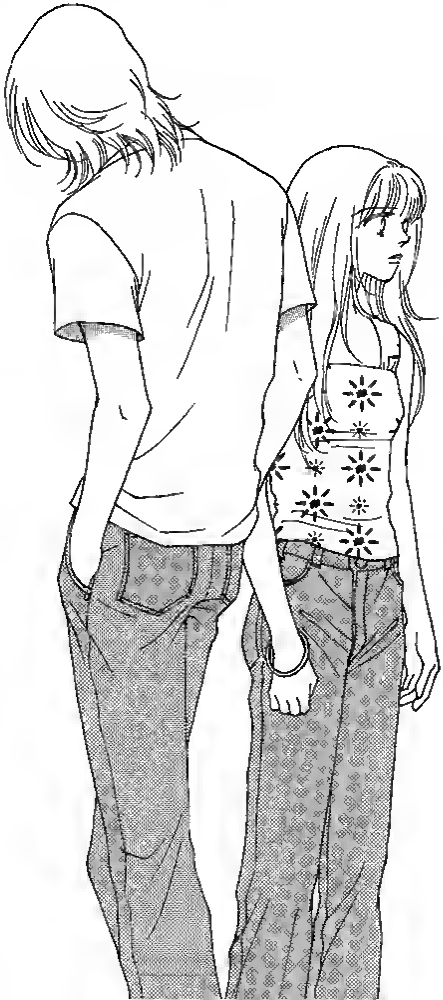

WHAT'S THIS ABOUT BREAKING UP WITH KIRA?
HARUMI?!
REI!
HEY, HAVE YOU SEEN HARUMI?
SHE WAS OVER IN THE COURTYARD WITH REI AND TATSUYA EARLIER.
?
EVERYONE'S FREAKING OUT!
REI'S SINGLE AGAIN?
BUT KIRA...
IS IT TRUE THAT YOU GUYS BROKE UP?

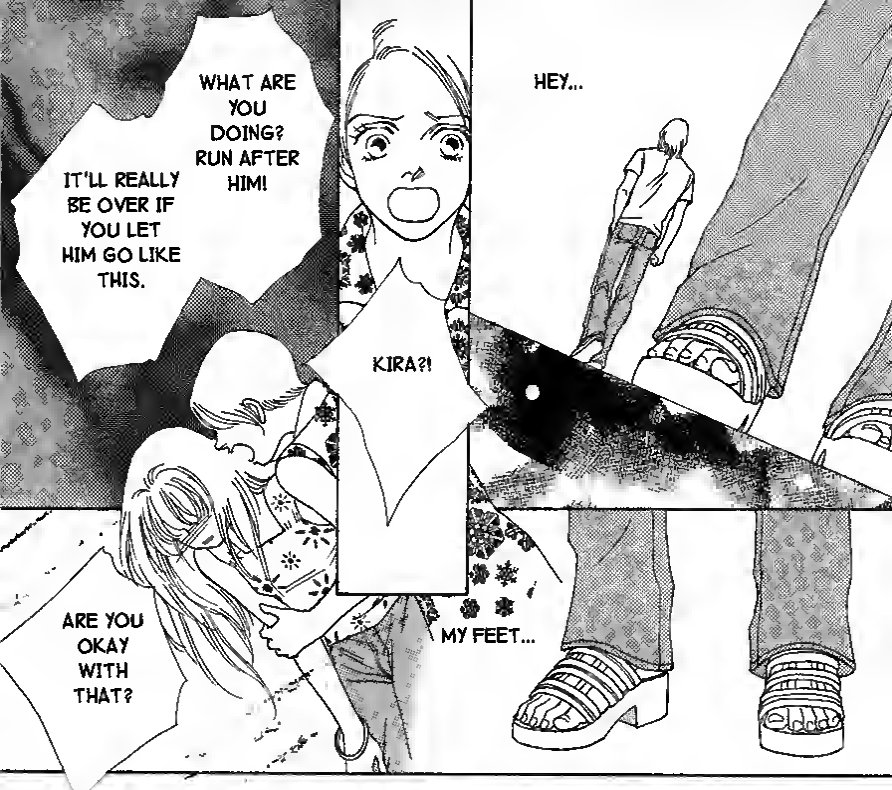
OF COURSE I UNDER-STAND THAT YOU'RE PISSED.
BUT THIS IS TOO MUCH!
YOU'RE BEING TOO SELFISH.
YOU KNOW, THE PROBLEM ISN'T WITH ME.
IT'S WITH KIRA.
IT'S NOT ABOUT DUMPING SOMEONE OR BEING DUMPED ANYMORE.
I JUST CAN'T DEAL WITH IT.
SHE'S BEING STUBBORN IN HER OWN WAY.


THIS ISN'T ABOUT WHAT'S IN YOUR HEAD.
IT'S ABOUT WHAT'S IN YOUR HEART.
WHAT?!
SO YOU CAN JUST WALK AWAY SO EASILY...
BASICALLY, I'M OVER IT.

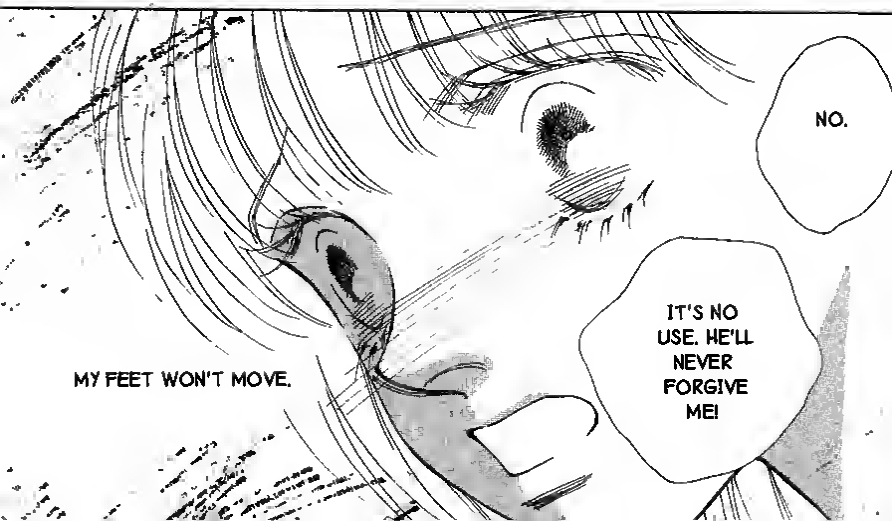

KIRA!

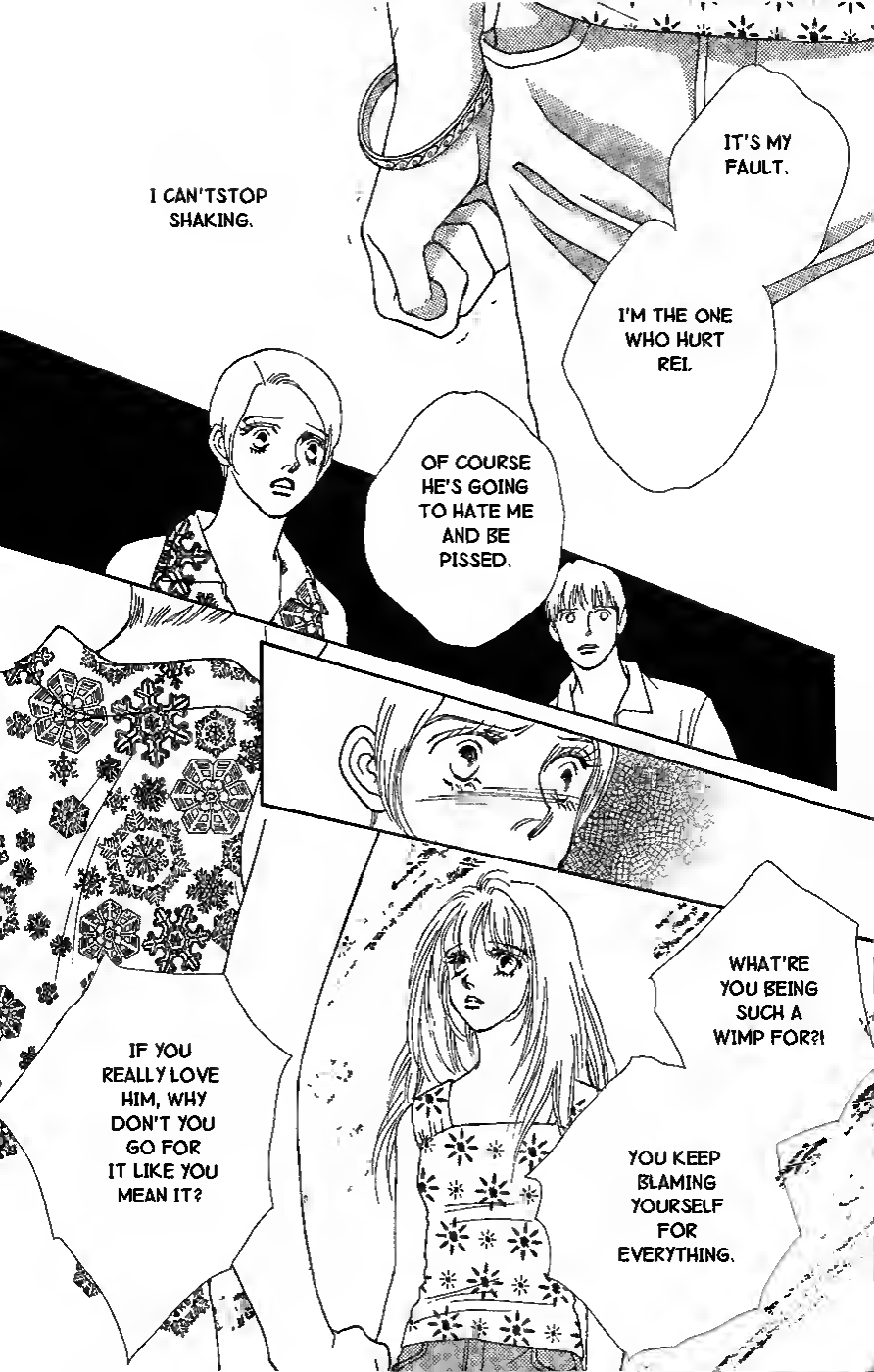


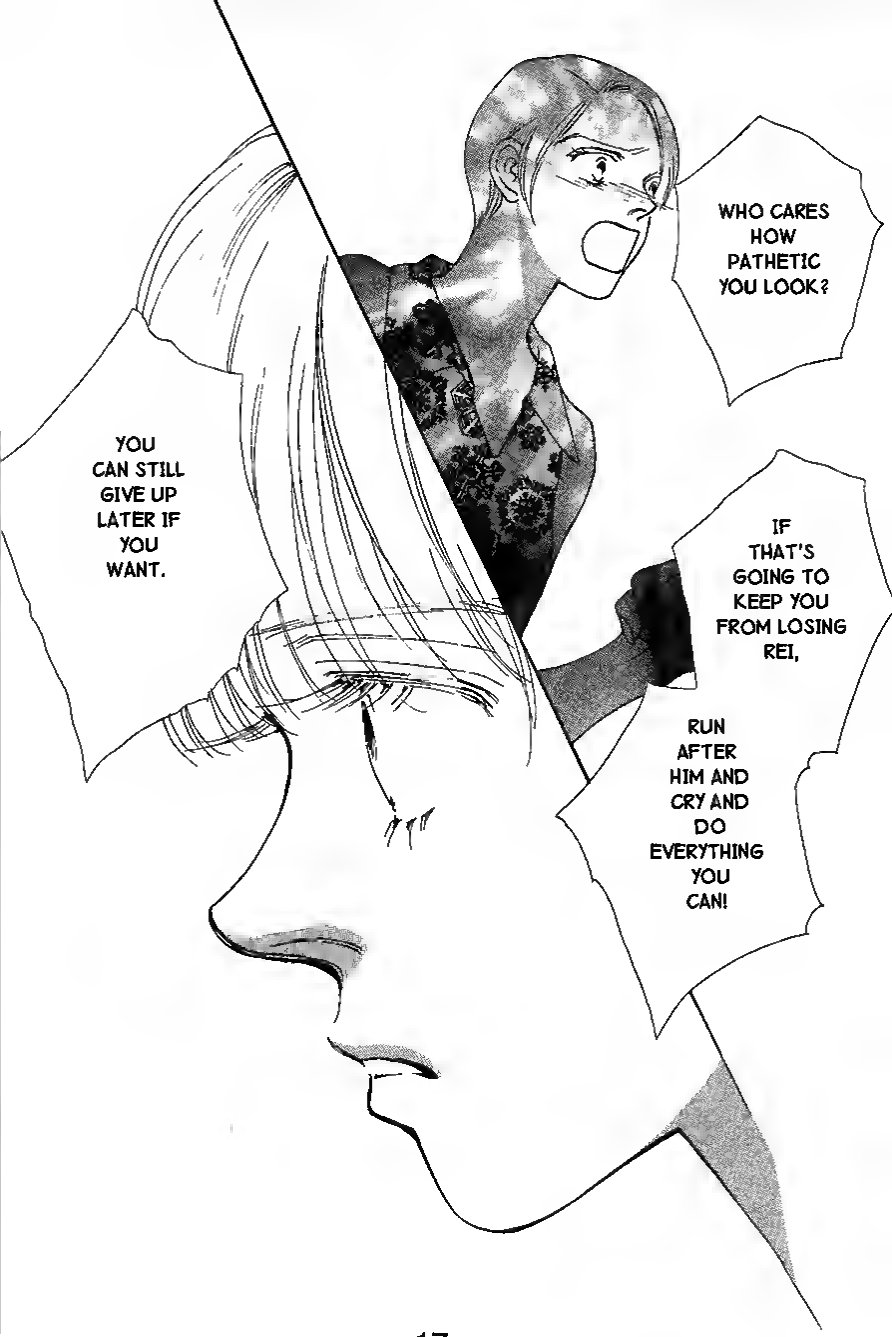




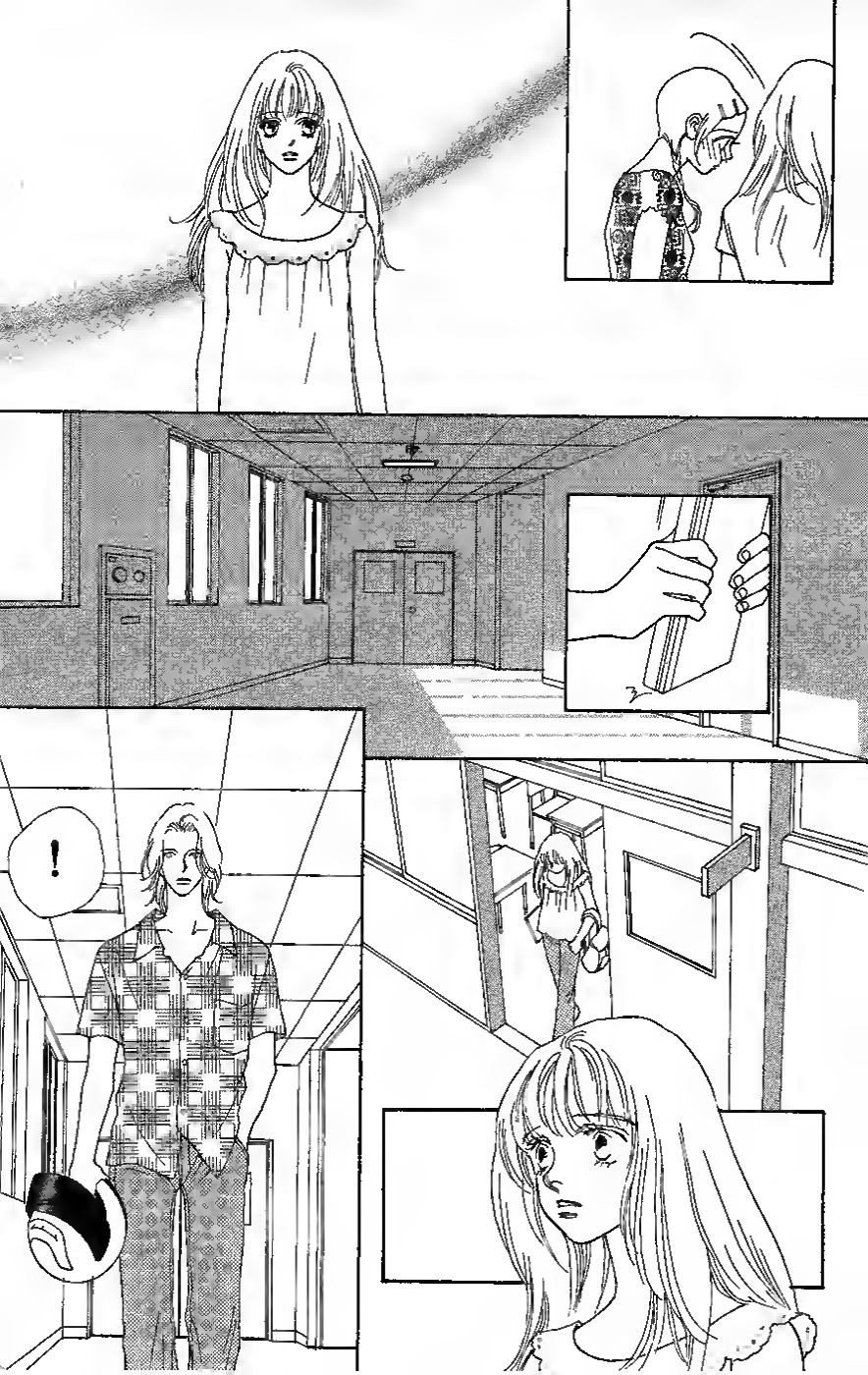
BASICALLY, I'M OVER IT.

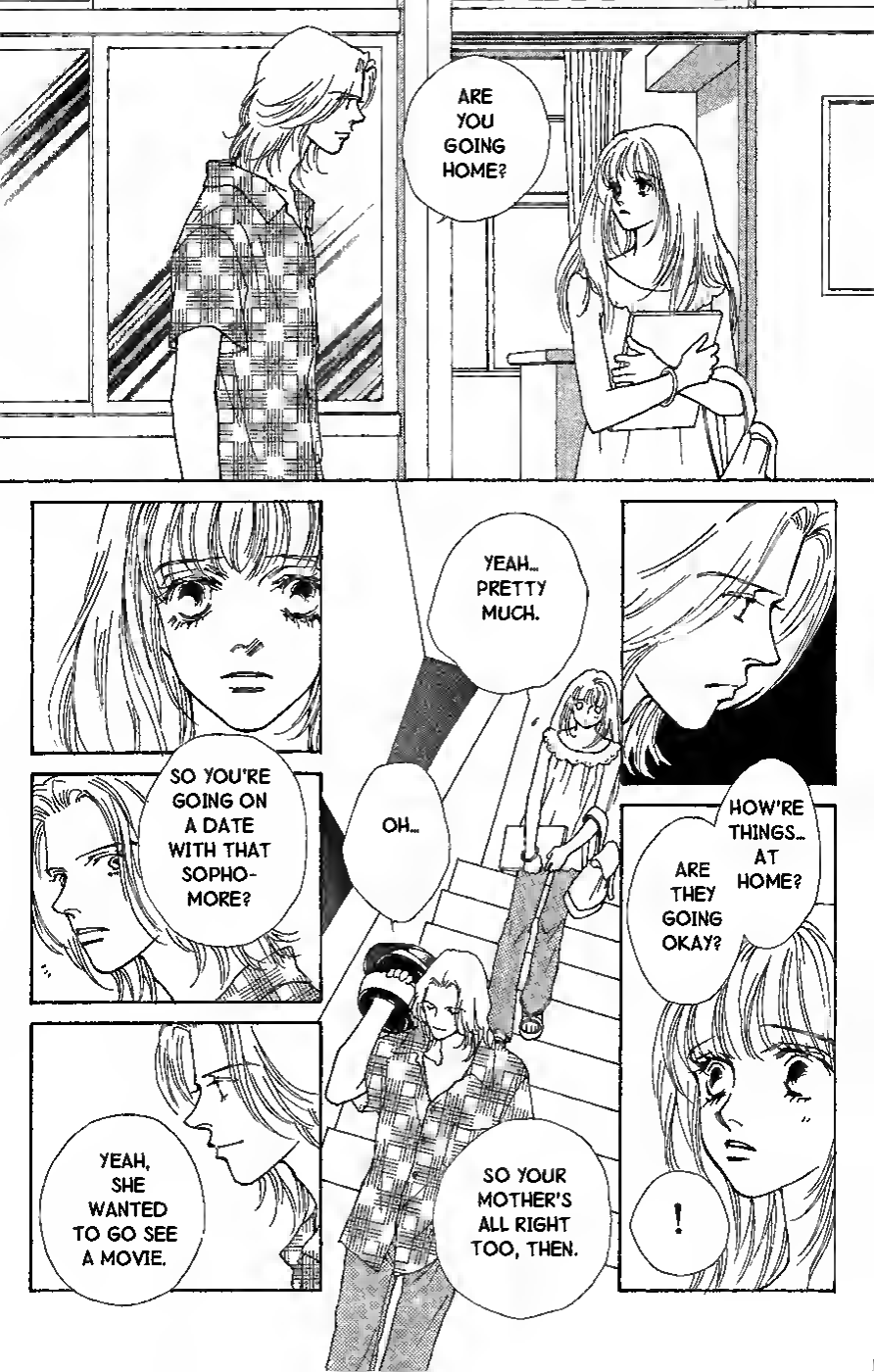


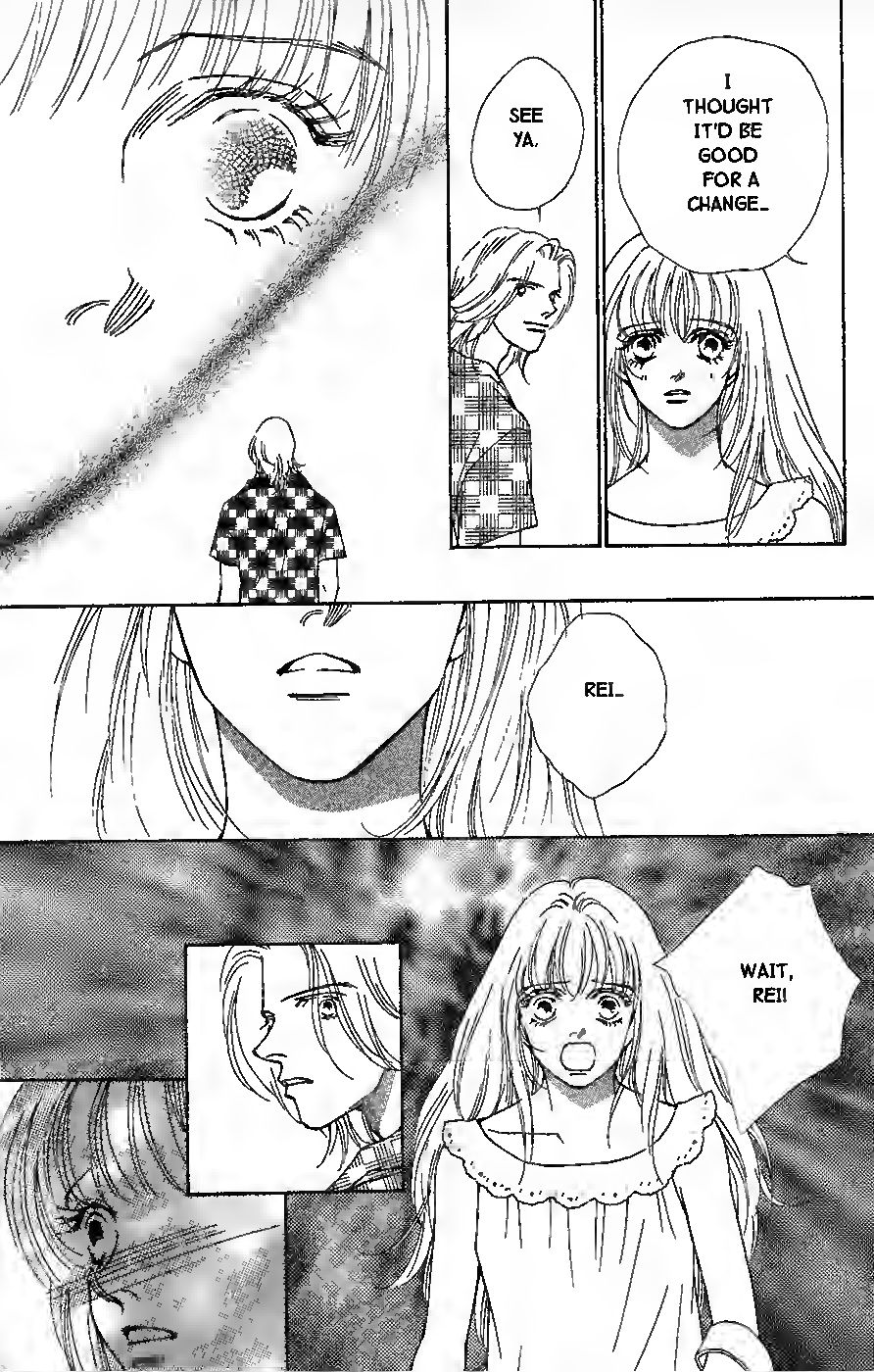

I CAN'T STOP SHAKING.
IT'S MY FAULT.
I'M THE ONE WHO HURT REI.
OF COURSE HE'S GOING TO HATE ME AND BE PISSED.
WHAT'RE YOU BEING SUCH A WIMP FOR?!
IF YOU REALLY LOVE HIM, WHY DON'T YOU GO FOR IT LIKE YOU MEAN IT?
YOU KEEP BLAMING YOURSELF FOR EVERYTHING.


WHO CARES HOW PATHETIC YOU LOOK?
IF THAT'S GOING TO KEEP YOU FROM LOSING REI,
RUN AFTER HIM AND CRY AND DO EVERYTHING YOU CAN!
YOU CAN STILL GIVE UP LATER IF YOU WANT.

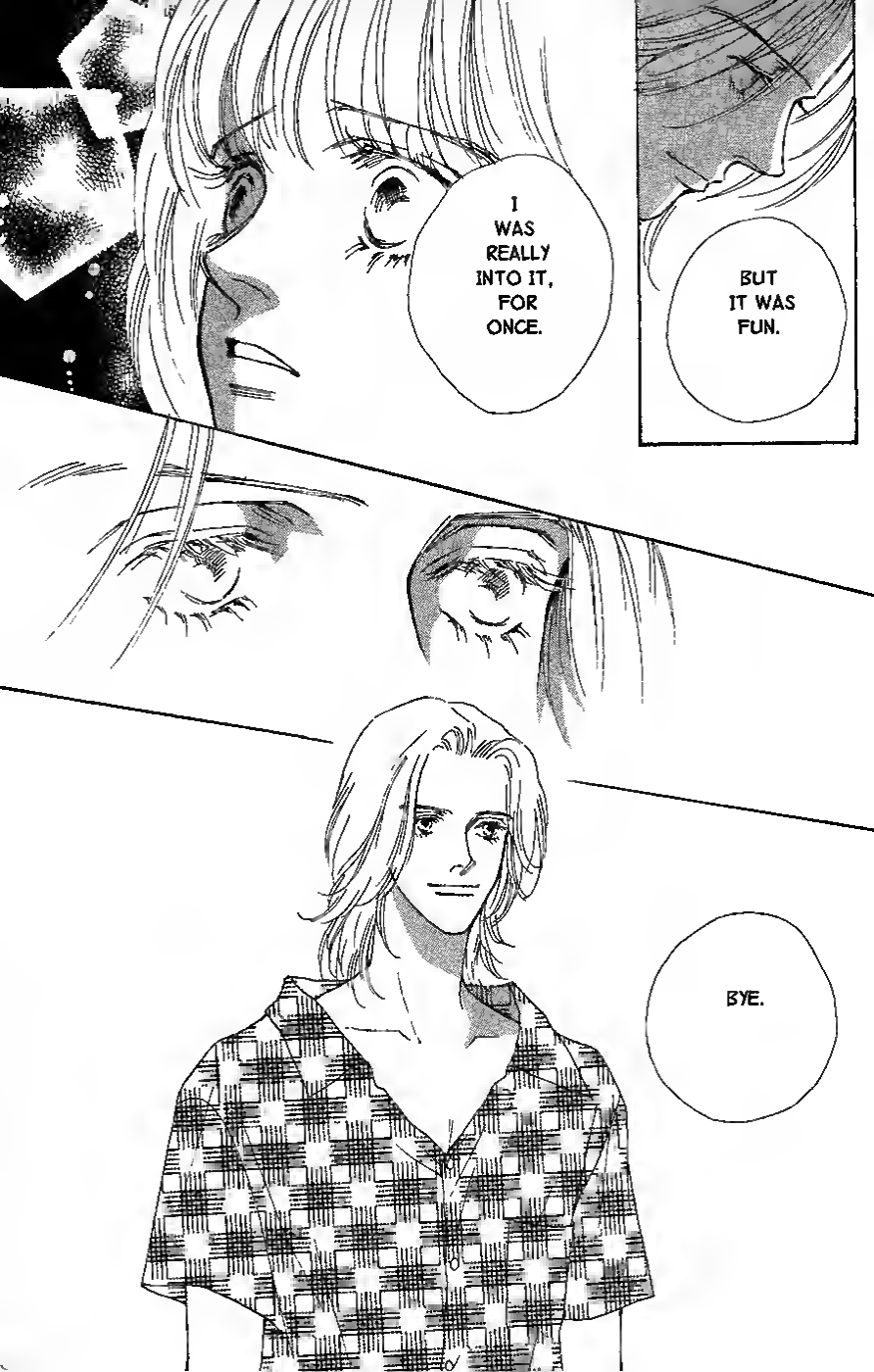
PLEASE BE CAREFUL OVER THE SUMMER VACATION.
ALWAYS CONDUCT YOURSELVES IN A MANNER BECOMING TO STUDENTS OF THIS SCHOOL.
I'm going to bodyboard this summer
Didn't you say that last summer, too?
OH MY GOD!? WOW!
IZUMI HAS A DATE WITH REI TODAY!
Ohmygod, you go!
I'M SO JEALOUS!

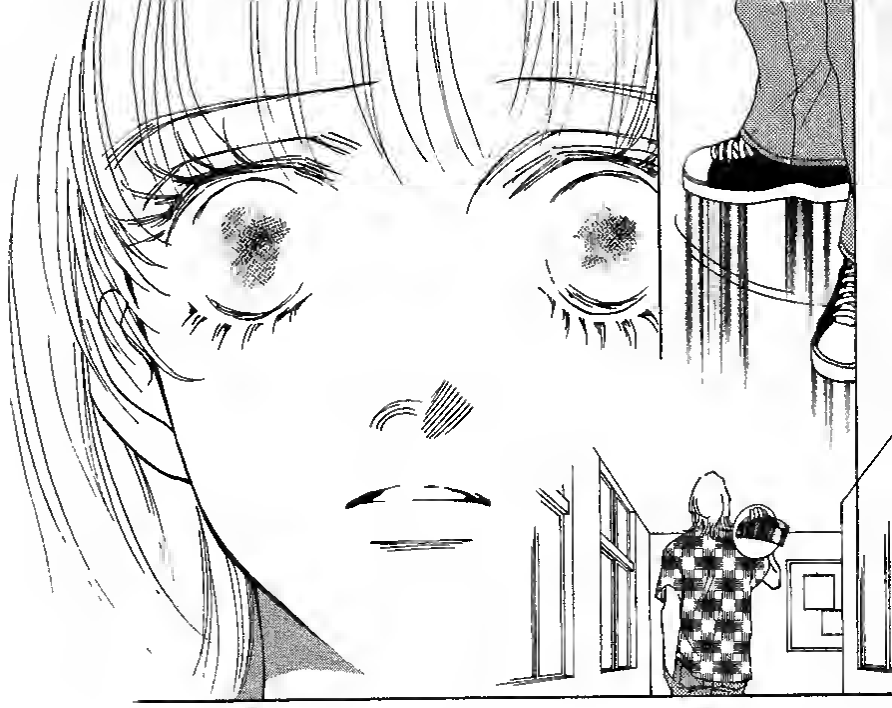



ARE YOU GOING HOME?
YEAH... PRETTY MUCH.
SO YOU'RE GOING ON A DATE WITH THAT SOPHO-MORE?
OH...
HOW'RE THINGS... AT HOME?
ARE THEY GOING OKAY?
!
YEAH, SHE WANTED TO GO SEE A MOVIE.
SO YOUR MOTHER'S ALL RIGHT TOO, THEN.

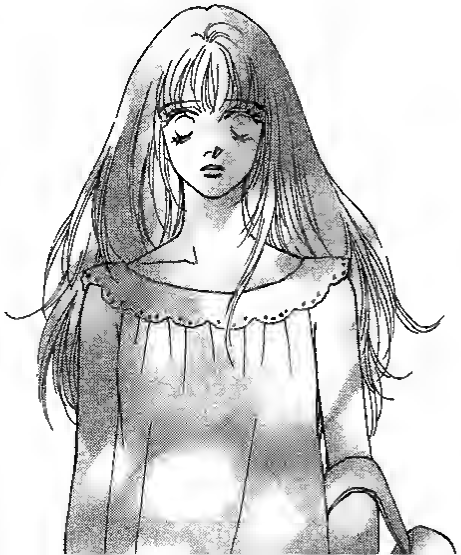

I THOUGHT IT'D BE GOOD FOR A CHANGE...
SEE YA.
REI...
WAIT, REI!

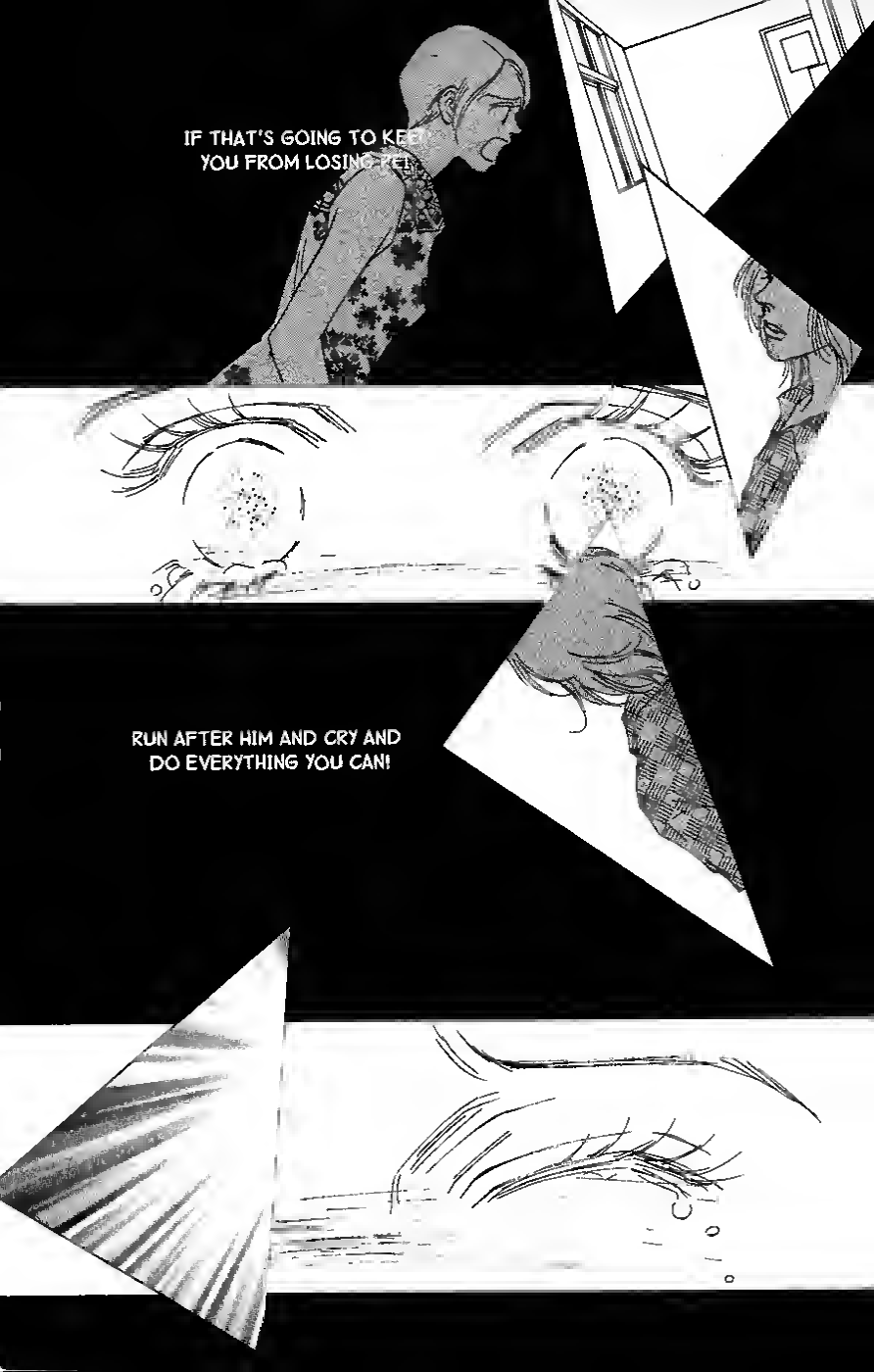
ARE...
ARE WE OVER...?
IS THIS REALLY IT?
ISN'T IT EASIER FOR BOTH OF US THAT WAY?
WHAT'S THE POINT OF BOTH OF US STRUGGLING TOGETHER?


I WAS REALLY INTO IT, FOR ONCE.
BUT IT WAS FUN.
BYE.



WHO CARES HOW PATHETIC YOU LOOK?!

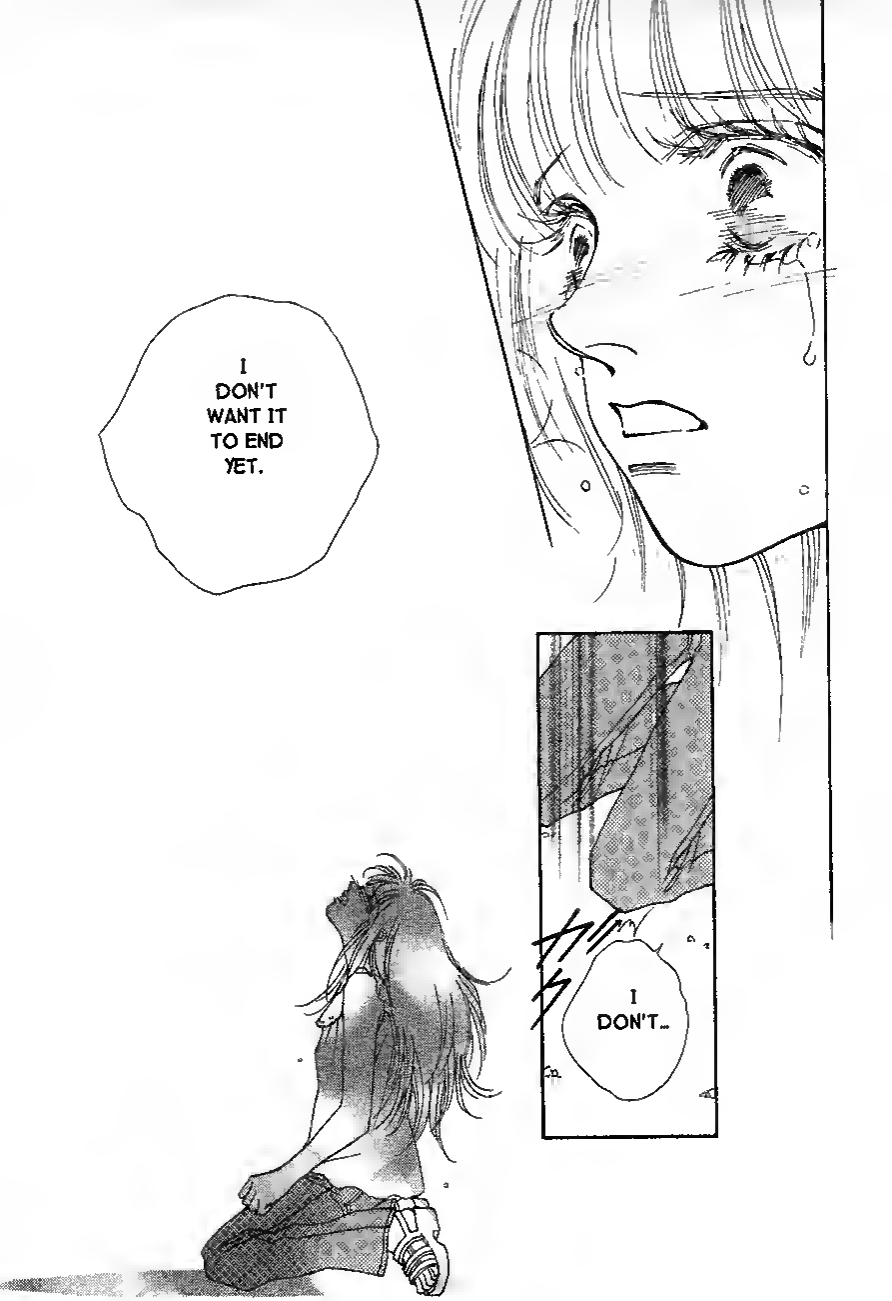



IF THAT'S GOING TO KEEP
YOU FROM LOSING HER,
RUN AFTER HIM AND CRY AND
DO EVERYTHING YOU CAN!

OFF ON
LOCK
IGNITION
WAIT!
REI!
WAIT!

IT'S NOT OVER!
WE'RE NOT FINISHED YET!

REI!
DON'T GO!
NO!


I DON'T WANT IT TO END YET.
I DON'T..

HEY ATSUSHI.
WHAT'S UP?
HELLO?
プルルル
WHAT!? SHIBUYA?
YEAH, WE PICKED UP SOME GIRLS...
CAN YOU COME OVER RIGHT AWAY?
BUT WE'RE IN A PINCH 'CAUSE OUR HEAD COUNTS DON'T MATCH.
OH, GOD.
YOU GUYS ARE STILL DOING THAT SHIT, HUH?
I'M BEGGING YOU.

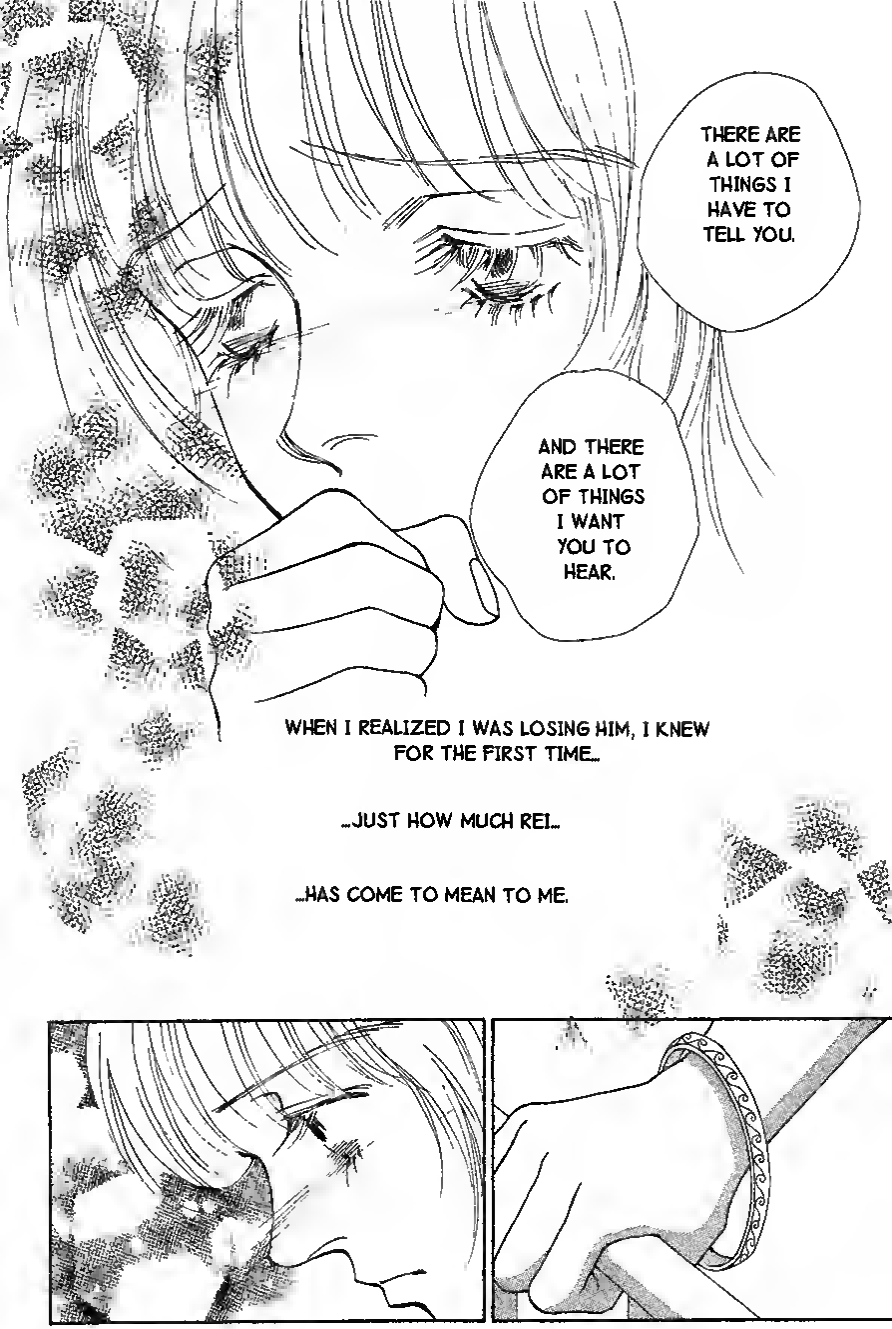
YOU'RE LATE, TATSUYA.
OH, HERE HE IS.
HEY, WAIT!
LATE, MY ASS.
YOU'RE THE ONE CALLING ME OUT OF NOWHERE.
!
HERE HE IS.
DON'T WORRY, DON'T WORRY.
HE'LL BE HERE SOON.
YOU SAID YOU WERE CALLING FRIENDS, BUT WE'RE STILL ONE SHORT.

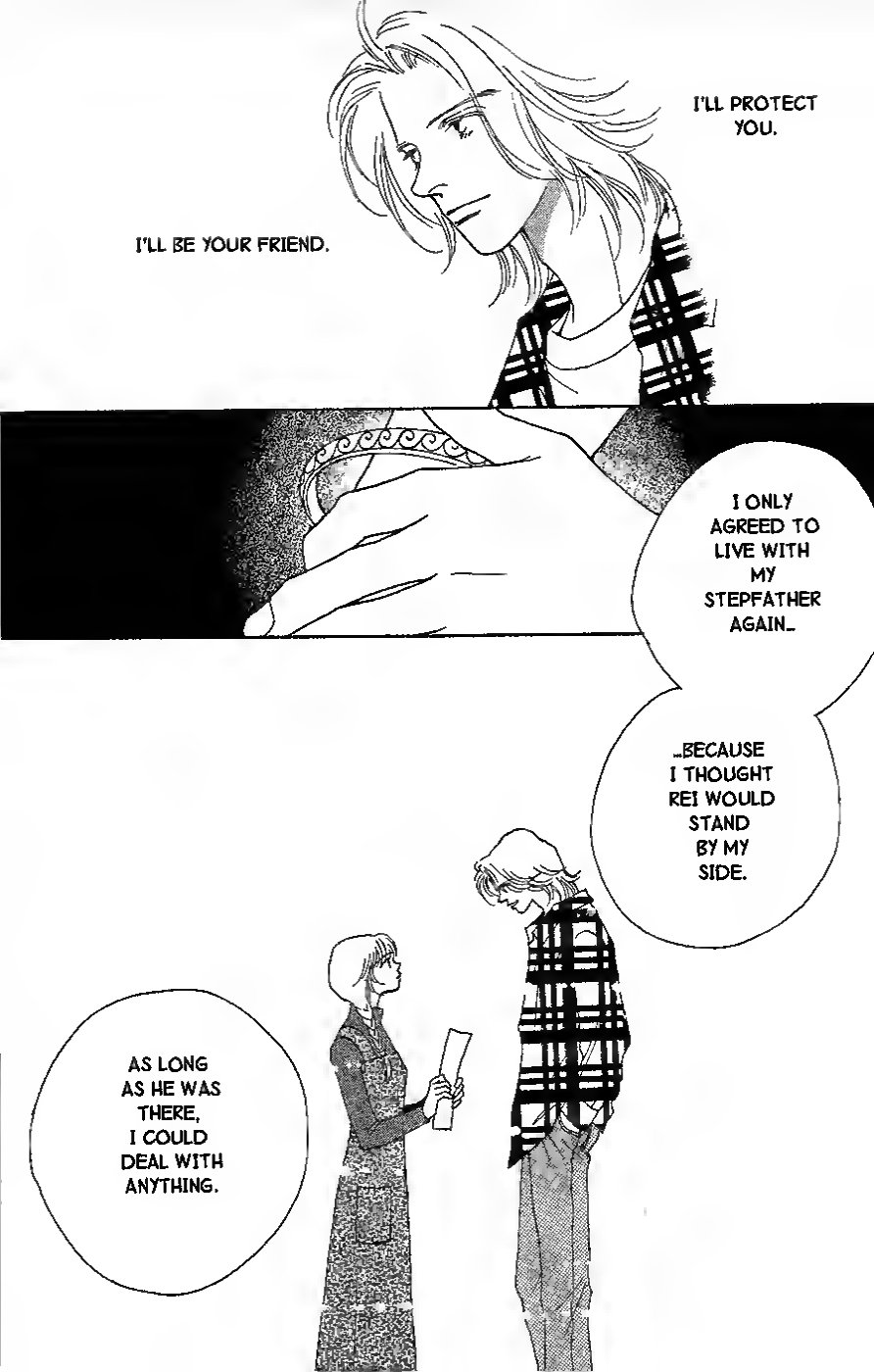
REI?
YO.
OH, THAT'S OVER!
I THOUGHT YOU WERE ON A DATE WITH THAT SOPHOMORE.
SHIT, HE'S SUPER HOT!
OH, NO! WHICH DO I CHOOSE?

WELL,
A QUICK IN-AND-OUT COULD BE GOOD.
LET'S ROLL.
SHE STARTED CRYING WHEN I INVITED HER TO A HOTEL.
THEN I WENT BACK HOME AND GOT ATSUSHI'S MESSAGE.
HEY, SORRY, AM I LATE?
.....
OH, MAN!
WE'RE GETTING WILD TONIGHT!

REI WAS HERE, BUT THEN HE WENT BACK OUT.
KIRA!
!
KEN!
WHY DON'T YOU WAIT INSIDE?
YOU HAVE A KEY, DON'T YOU?

カサ
PLEASE!
COME HOME SOON.


THERE ARE A LOT OF THINGS I HAVE TO TELL YOU.
AND THERE ARE A LOT OF THINGS I WANT YOU TO HEAR.
WHEN I REALIZED I WAS LOSING HIM, I KNEW FOR THE FIRST TIME...
...JUST HOW MUCH REI...
...HAS COME TO MEAN TO ME.


I'LL PROTECT YOU.
I'LL BE YOUR FRIEND.
I ONLY AGREED TO LIVE WITH MY STEPFATHER AGAIN..
..BECAUSE I THOUGHT REI WOULD STAND BY MY SIDE.
AS LONG AS HE WAS THERE, I COULD DEAL WITH ANYTHING.

AAARGH! THERE'S NO WAY WE'LL ALL FIT!
HEY, BEFORE WE GO TO THE KARAOKE PLACE, LET'S TAKE SOME PHOTO STICKERS
HEEEY! SOMEONE STEPPED ON MY FOOT!
PARCO
HMV

CAN I HAVE A SMOKE?
SURE, HOLD ON.

THIS ONE'S GOOD.
YOU WANNA GO SOME-WHERE LATER?
YUKA! WHAT'RE YOU DOING?
COME OVER HERE.
LET'S TAKE ONE WITH ALL THE GIRLS.

LATER.
SUPE
RANK

THAT'S RIGHT.
THIS SHIT IS WHAT SUITS ME BEST.

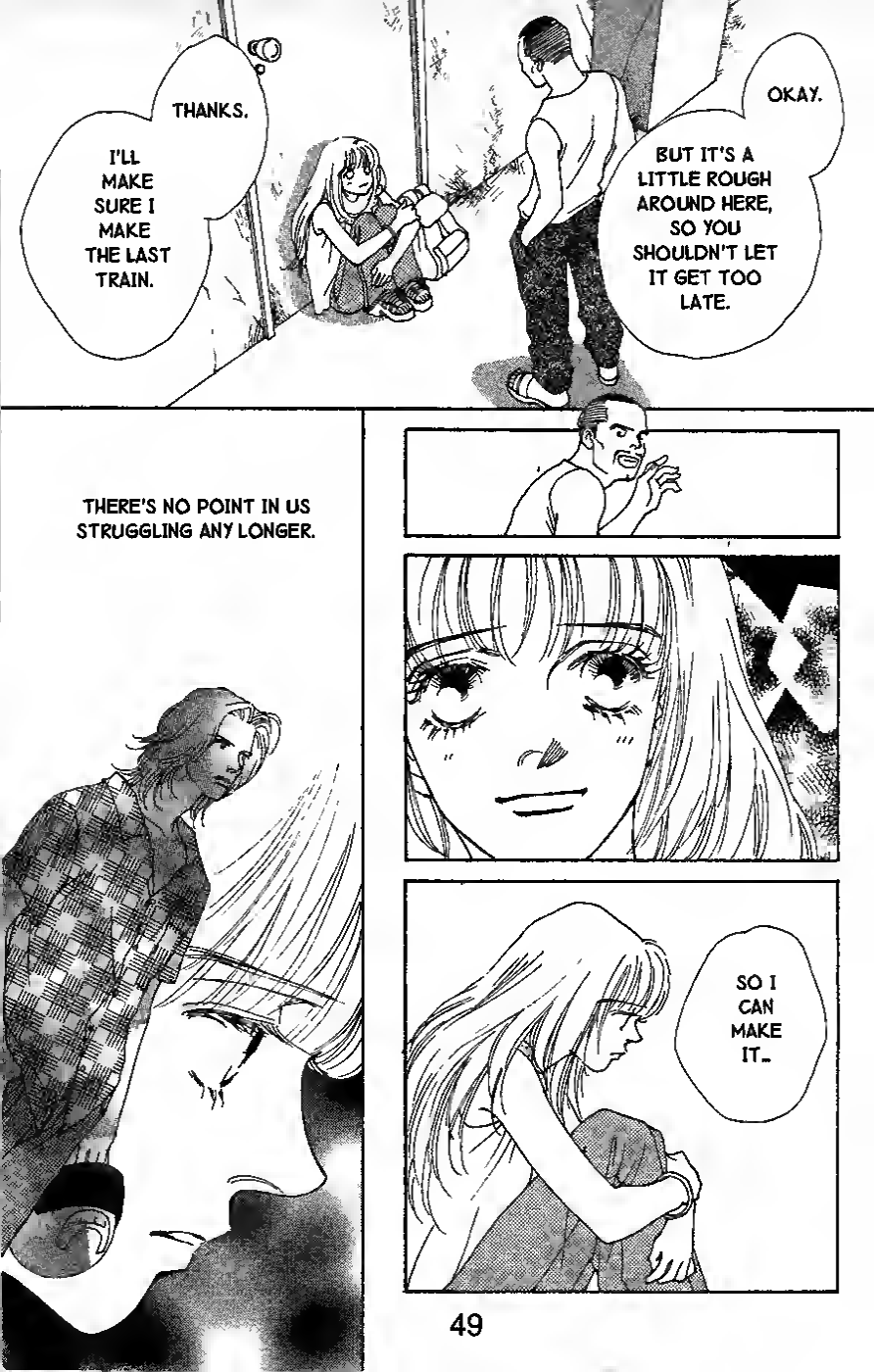
GOD,
PLEASE GIVE ME ONE LAST CHANCE.

B1
SHOT
5'00-100
YOU'RE GOING ALL OUT TONIGHT, MIKI.
HEY, COULD YOU PUT IN PUFFY FOR ME?
OH, AND I WANT BRIGRI!
ARE YOU SURE YOU'RE ALL RIGHT WITH THIS?

KIRA.
YOU'RE GONNA LET IT END LIKE THIS?
WHAT?
YOU'RE NOT GOING TO HAVE ANY REGRETS OR ANYTHING?
WELL, I'D BE LYING IF I SAID I DON'T HAVE ANY REGRETS AT ALL.
BUT THINKING ABOUT IT NOW, MAYBE THERE'S A PROBLEM WITH THE WHOLE RELATIONSHIP THING IN GENERAL.
IT WAS THE FIRST TIME I WAS WITH A GIRL LIKE KIRA.
MAYBE I WAS JUST INTO IT BECAUSE SHE WAS SO HARD TO GET.

COME ON, YOU GUYS! WHAT ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT OVER THERE?
I FEEL BAD SAYING IT,
BUT KIRA AND I WERE BOUND TO END UP LIKE THIS.
SO REI, WHAT KIND OF SONGS DO YOU LIKE?
OH, I DON'T REALLY KNOW THAT MANY.
I'D RATHER JUST HEAR YOU GUYS SING.
IF YOU SAY THAT, MIKI WON'T LET GO OF THE MIC ALL NIGHT!
23
.....

KIRA!
YOU'RE STILL WAITING?
AT THIS RATE, REI MIGHT NOT BE BACK TONIGHT.
IT'S ALL RIGHT. I'LL WAIT JUST A LITTLE LONGER...


THANKS.
I'LL MAKE SURE I MAKE THE LAST TRAIN.
OKAY.
BUT IT'S A LITTLE ROUGH AROUND HERE, SO YOU SHOULDN'T LET IT GET TOO LATE.
THERE'S NO POINT IN US STRUGGLING ANY LONGER.
SO I CAN MAKE IT.

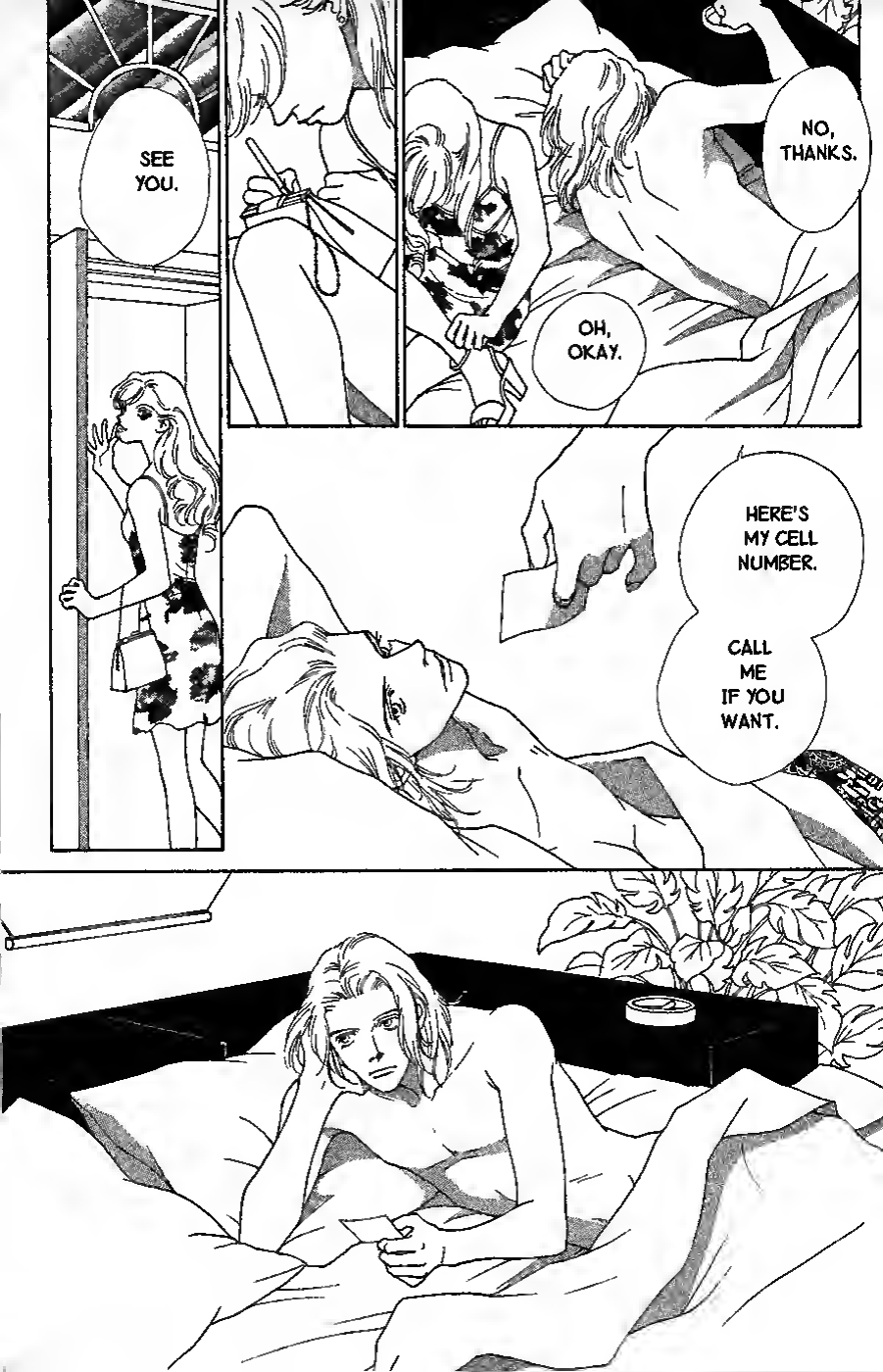
OKAY, CAN I SING MISHA NOW?
CAN I BUST IT OUT?
BYE..
I WONDER IF WE'LL STILL MAKE IT.
Yeah!
OKAY!!
GO AHEAD AND ABUSE MY EARDRUMS!
Yll3——h
YOU KNOW, TATSUYA WAS ONE THING, BUT I THINK IT WAS A MISTAKE TO INVITE REI.
OKAY, THE PARTY'S DEFINITELY STARTED, BUT..

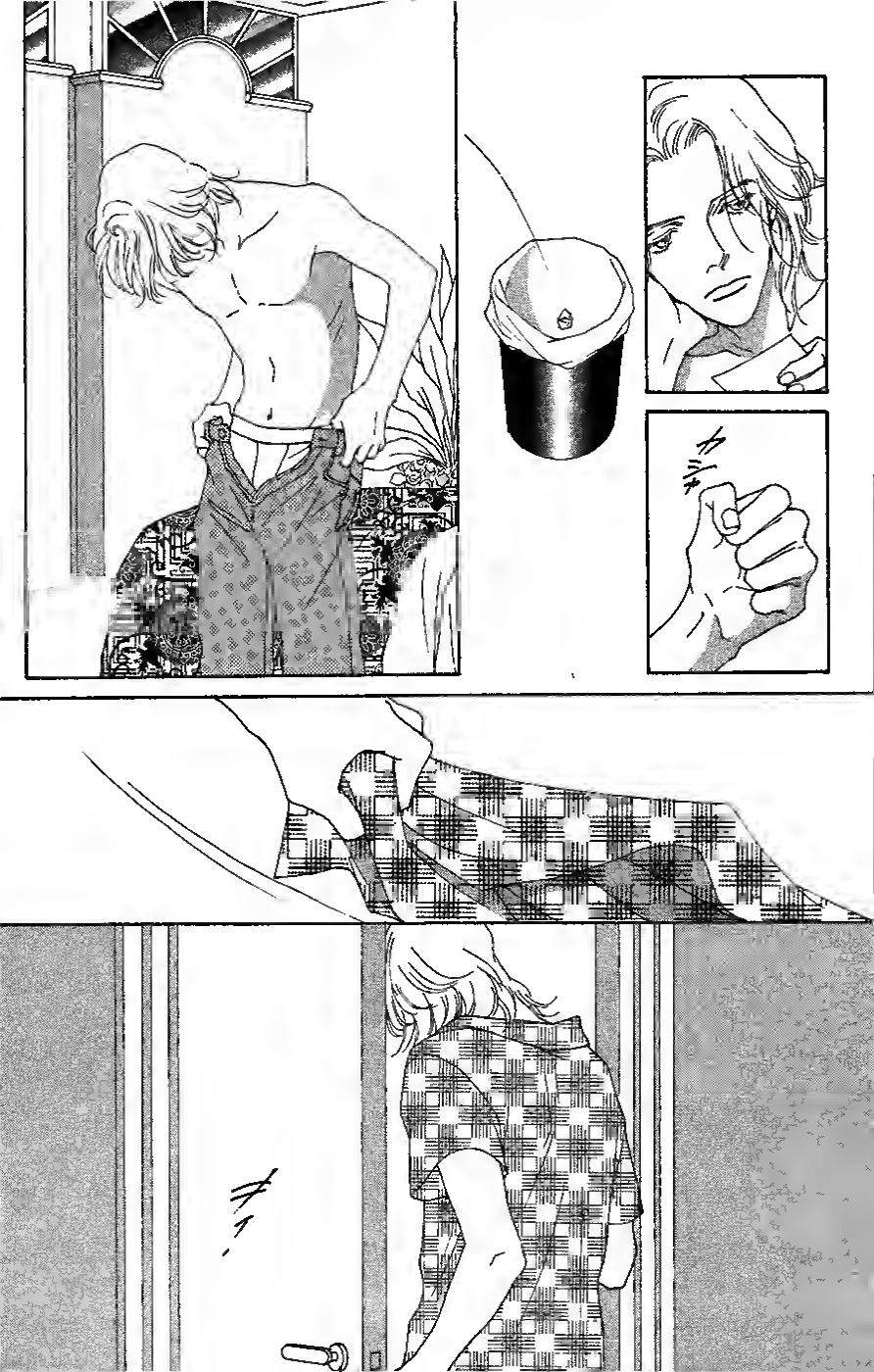
AT THIS RATE, THEY'RE GONNA GET ALL THE GIRLS.
ALL RIGHT! NOW IT'S MAX WITH ALL OF US TOGETHER.
SOUNDS GOOD.
WAIT.. I'VE GOTTA RUN TO THE BATH-ROOM.

Come back soon, Yuka!
ALL RIGHT, ALL RIGHT.
OH, I GOTTA GO TOO.
23
23
ぶるっ

I CAN'T BELIEVE YUKA!
SNEAK ATTACK.
ARE YOU SERIOUS!?
THOSE TWO BUSTED OUT FOR REAL?
DAMN THAT BASTARD REI. HE TOOK YUKA, THE HOTTEST CHICK HERE!
23
OH, LORD..

HM.
THANKS!
YOU WANNA GET SOMETHING TO EAT?
CAN YOU GET MY ZIPPER?


SEE YOU.
NO, THANKS.
OH, OKAY.
HERE'S MY CELL NUMBER.
CALL ME IF YOU WANT.


カシャ

CARIBBEAN STYLE
GARDEN REST
I WAS WATCHING YOUR BIKE FOR YOU.
23

...JUST...
IT'S YOUR BUSINESS WHAT YOU DO, BUT...
YOU KNOW,
I WANT THIS STUFF TO STAY AWAY FROM KIRA FOR A WHILE.
EVEN IF YOU'RE ALREADY OVER IT, IT'S NOT OVER FOR KIRA. AT ALL.
IT DOESN'T MEAN ANYTHING, EVEN IF SHE FINDS OUT.
IF YOU'RE REALLY MY FRIEND,
DON'T HURT KIRA ANYMORE.

IT'S FUNNY.
NOTNING NAPPENED ANYWAY.
LET'S JUST SAY TNAT...
...MY PACKAGE WAS USELESS WNEN CALLED UPON.

WAS THE GIRL PISSED?
SHE FORGAVE ME WHEN I TOLD HER I WAS DEPRESSED BECAUSE MY MOTHER AND BROTHER DIED.
I CAN'T BELIEVE IT!
HOW CAN THIS BE HAPPENING? I'M STILL IN HIGH SCHOOL!
23
MAYBE YOU'RE REALLY NOT.
WELL, EVEN IF YOU SAY YOU'RE DONE WITH KIRA,

EVERYONE'S SO LUCKY.
THEY CAN TOUCH SO EASILY.
IT LOOKS SO FUN- ALL LOVEY-DOVEY AND SHIT...

BUT TO KIRA,
IT'S VIOLENCE.

I DID A LITTLE RESEARCH.
DO YOU KNOW WHAT KIND OF GUY KIRA'S STEPDAD IS?
HE RUNS A STEEL MANUFACTURING COMPANY, AND HE'S SUPPOSEDLY A WARM FAMILY MAN.
!
..BUT HIS REPUTATION IS DISGUSTINGLY GOOD.
IT WAS A HUGE SURPRISE...

HIS REPUTATION IN HIS NEIGHBORHOOD..
ALL IN ALL, HE'S VERY RESPECTED.
..IS THAT HE'S KIND AND HONEST AND REALLY TAKES GOOD CARE OF KIRA..
...WHO ISN'T EVEN HIS REAL DAUGHTER.
WHAT A CROCK! IT'S OF NO CONCERN TO THE PUBLIC WHAT HE DOES BEHIND CLOSED DOORS.
AND ON TOP OF THAT, HE DOES A LOT OF VOLUNTEER WORK. HE'S PRETTY WELL-KNOWN AROUND THESE PARTS.

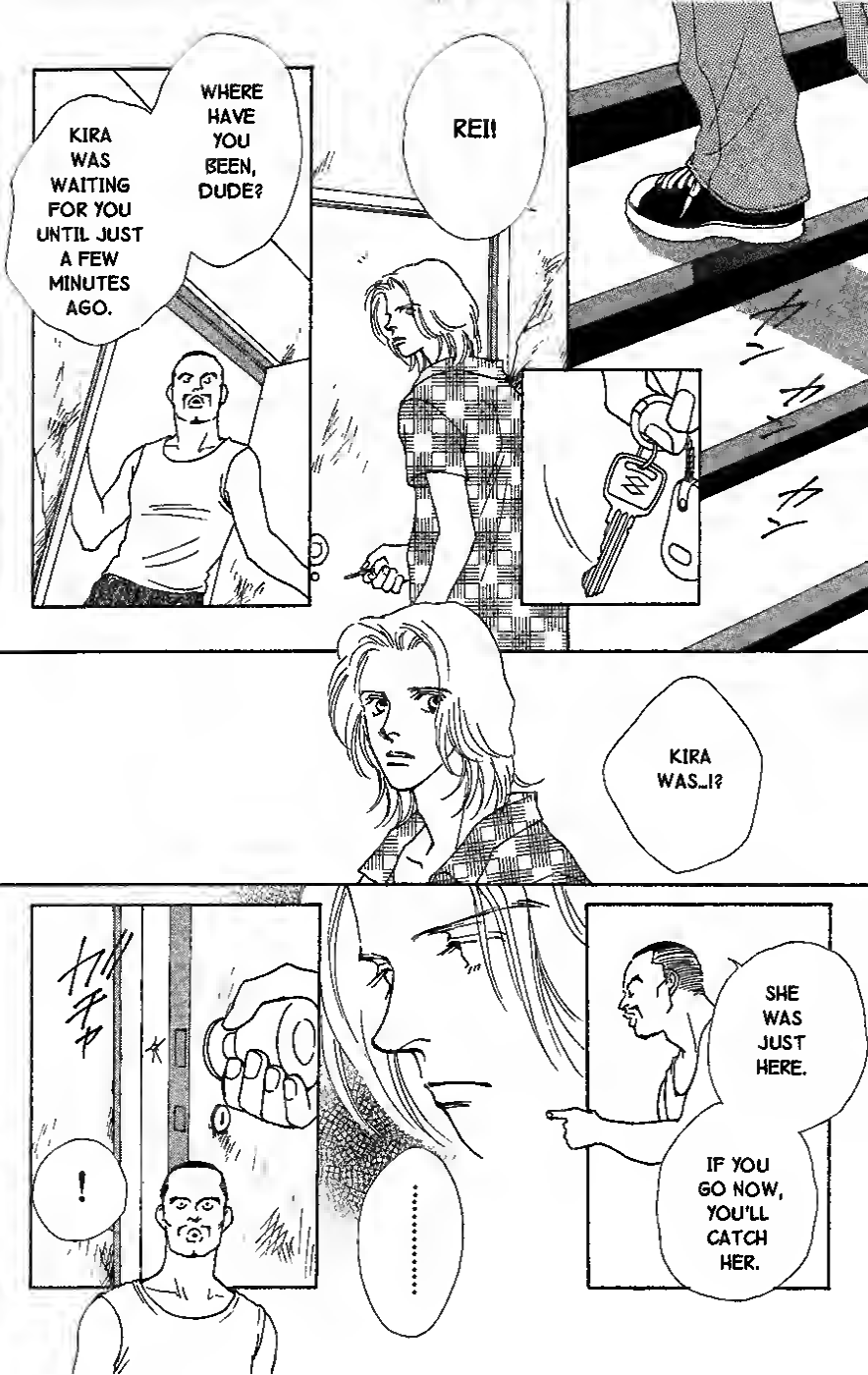
NO MATTER HOW AMAZING I AM,
THE WORLD HAS STILL NEVER HEARD OF ME.
NO MATTER WHAT COUNTRY YOU'RE IN, IT'S RESULTS THAT MATTER. POTENTIAL IS PRETTY MUCH MEANINGLESS.

I'M GOING TO BE A WORLD-CLASS RACER AND TRAVEL ALL OVER THE WORLD.
I'M GOING TO BE A RACER.
23
YEAH... YOU'LL PULL IT OFF.
BUT ALL I HAVE IS POTENTIAL.

OH, REI!
NO MATTER HOW MUCH I SAY I'LL PROTECT KIRA...
OR THAT I'LL MAKE HER HAPPY...
THAT PERVERTED OLD MAN IS THE ONE THE WORLD WILL APPROVE OF.

IT'S NO BIG SURPRISE.
TNE ONLY TNING I DO..
..IS GET PISSED WNEN THINGS DON'T GO MY WAY..
AND PICK UP GIRLS ON TNE STREET.

ALL I AM IS A STUPID KID WHO'S ONLY BEEN AROUND FOR SEVENTEEN YEARS.
TOWER RECORDS
IT'S A GLOBAL THING
GAMESOUL
TOWER RECORDS
TELEPHONE
NEW ALBUM IN STORE!

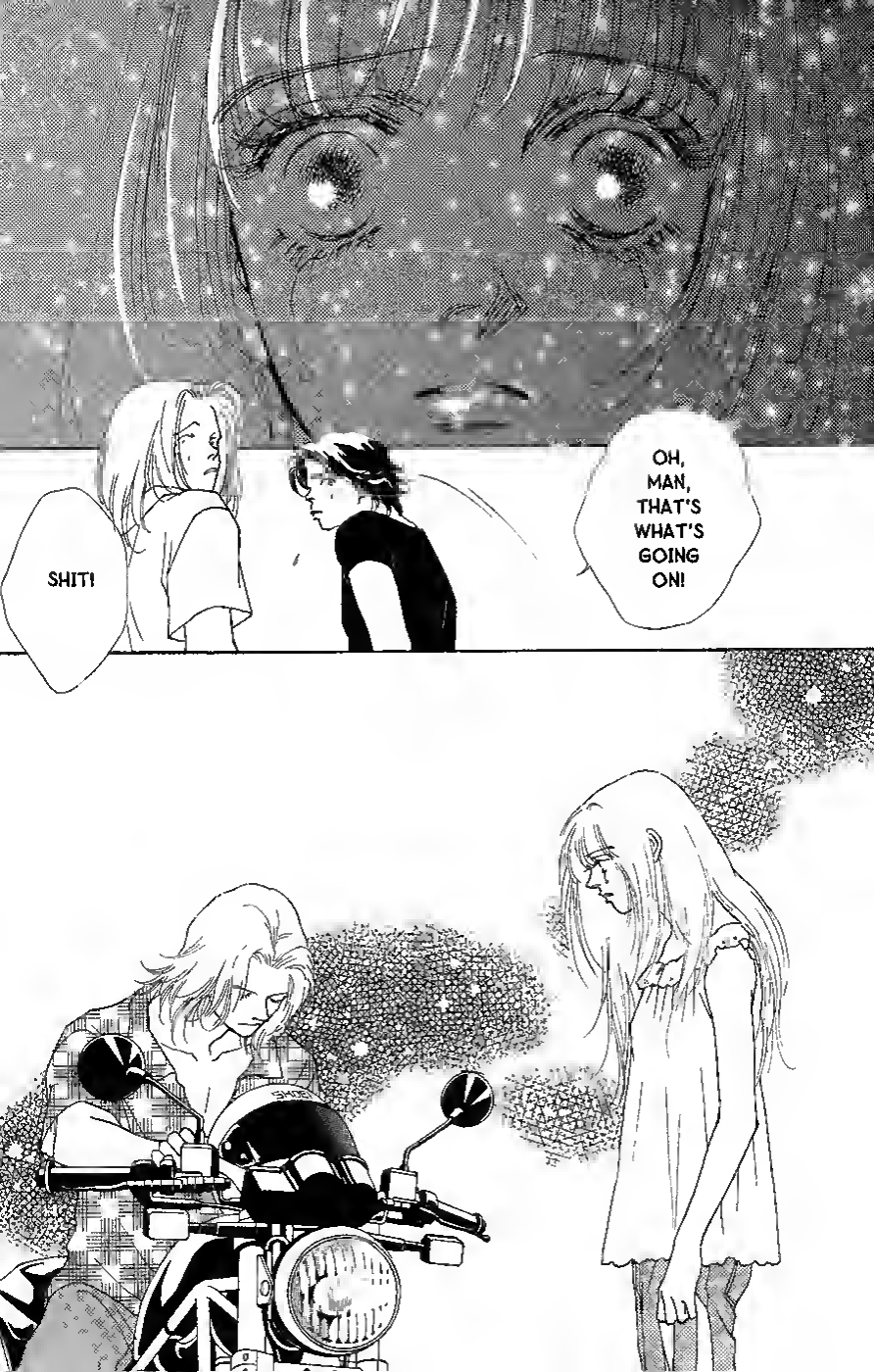

WHERE HAVE YOU BEEN, DUDE?
KIRA WAS WAITING FOR YOU UNTIL JUST A FEW MINUTES AGO.
REI!
KIRA WAS...!?
SHE WAS JUST HERE.
IF YOU GO NOW, YOU'LL CATCH HER.
!
.....

HEY, HEY, YOU'RE NOT GOING AFTER HER?
DAMN...
DAMN IT!

HEY.
HEY HEY, WHAT'S WRONG? YOU'RE CRYING.
WE'LL LISTEN IF YOU WANT TO TALK.
HEY, SWEETIE!

WHAT'S UP WITH HER?
WHO CARES? WE JUST WANT ONE THING.
IT MIGHT EVEN BE BETTER WITH AN EMOTIONAL ONE LIKE THIS.
GOOD POINT, DUDE!

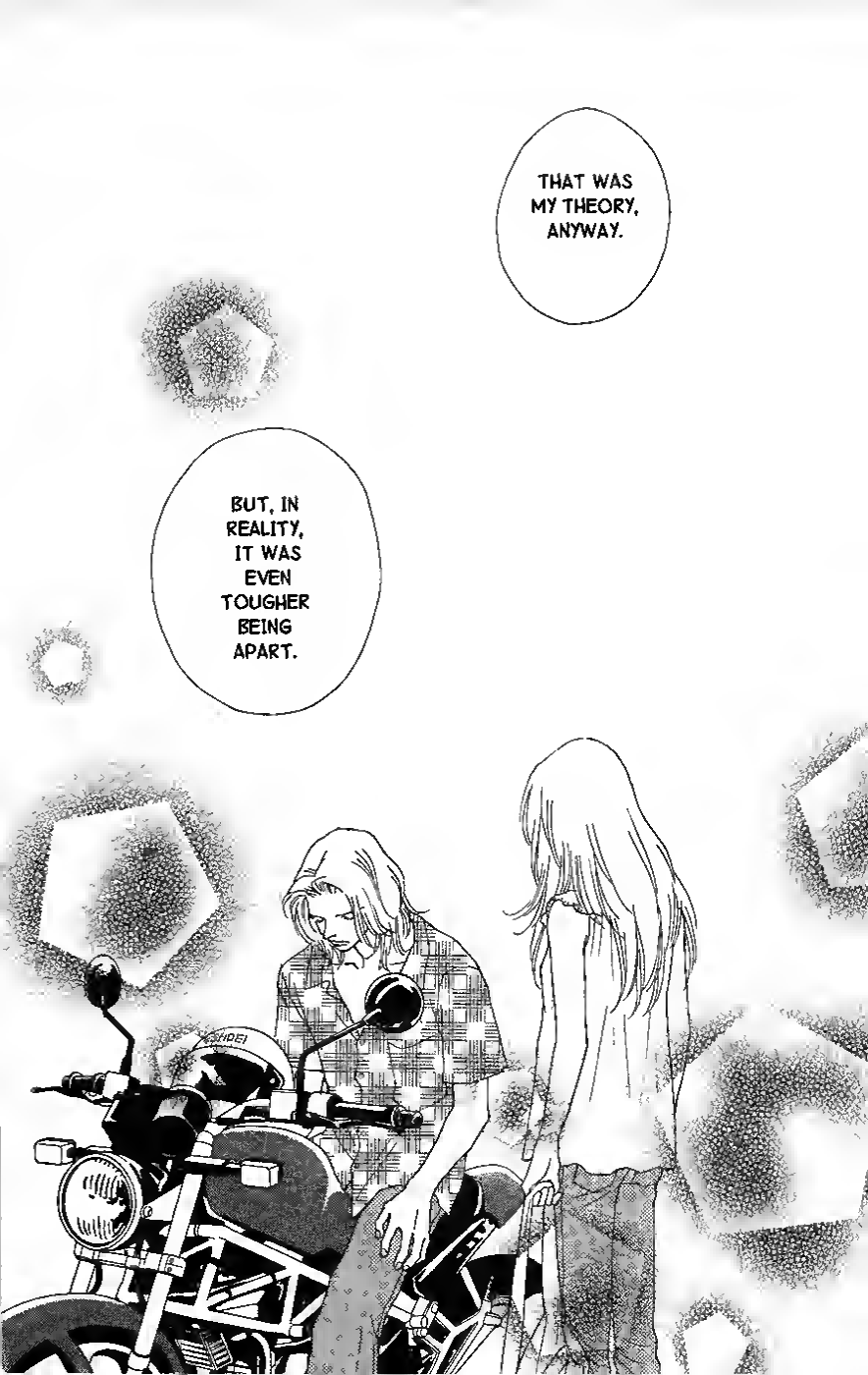
IT'S OKAY, IT'S OKAY.
WE'LL HELP YOU FEEL BETTER.
HERE, STOP CRYING AND COME OVER HERE.
KIRA! I'M SORRY ABOUT BEFORE.
IT'S ALL MY FAULT.
SHOE!


SHIT!
OH, MAN, THAT'S WHAT'S GOING ON!

WHAT WOULD'VE HAPPENED IF I DIDN'T SHOW UP?
THOSE GUYS WANTED TO GO SOMEWHERE AND TAKE ADVANTAGE OF YOU.
WHAT EVER..
..IT DOESN'T MATTER ANYMORE.
THAT'S WHAT ALL GUYS DO, ANYWAY. IT'S ALL THE SAME.
I JUST HAVE TO LIE THERE QUIETLY UNTIL IT'S OVER.
I JUST HAVE TO PLAY DEAD.

IN YOUR EYES, ALL MEN MUST BE ANIMALS.
BUT I GUESS YOU'RE RIGHT.
DUCATI
I'M NOT MUCH DIFFERENT FROM THOSE GUYS, OR EVEN YOUR EVIL STEPFATHER.
I'M NOT THE KIND OF GUY WHO'D BE ABLE TO SUPPORT YOU AND HELP HEAL ALL YOUR WOUNDS.

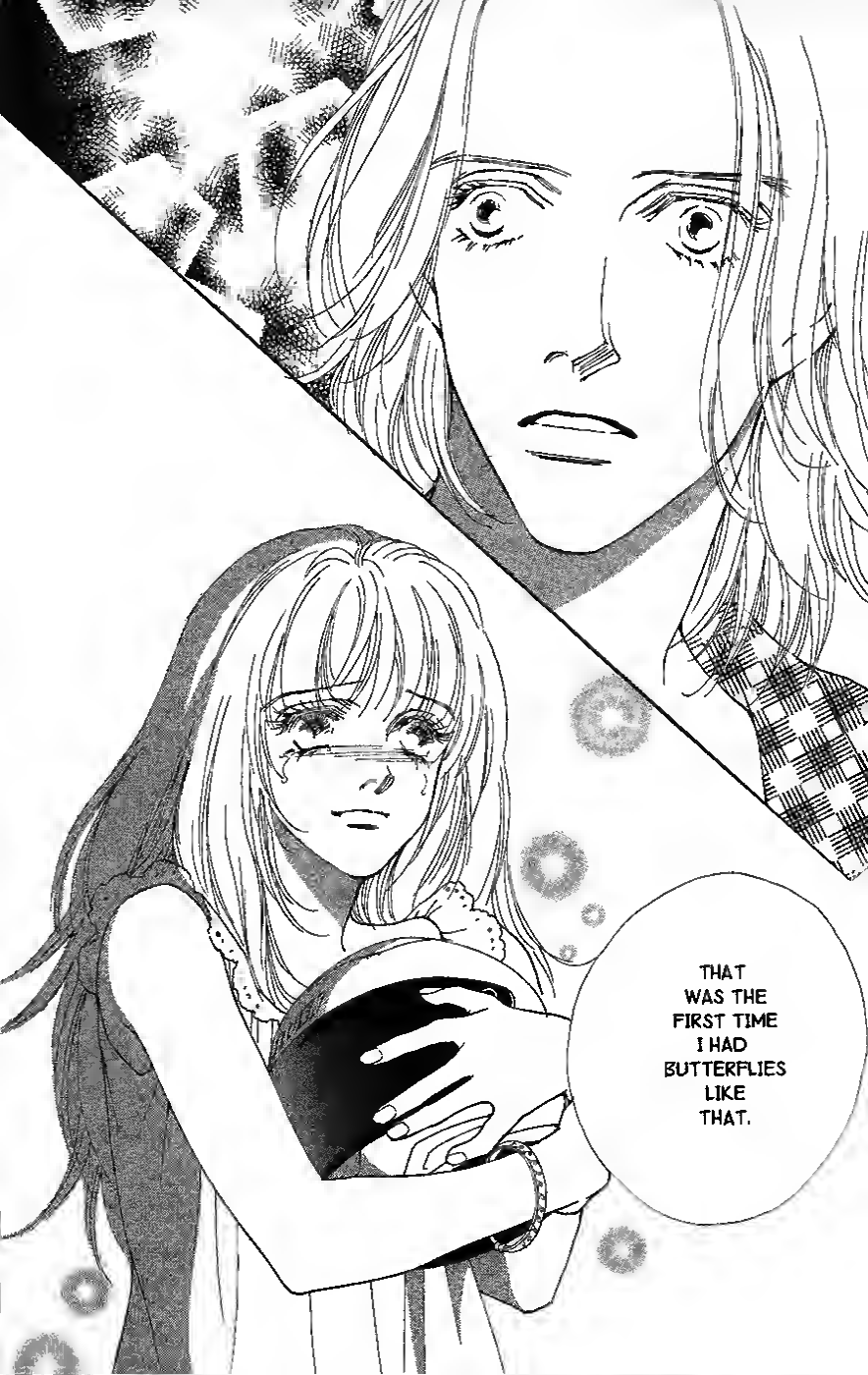
THAT'S WHY I THOUGHT WE SHOULD BE APART.
I HAVE MY PRIDE TOO, YOU KNOW.
IT'S TOUGH BEING AROUND YOU WHEN I FEEL POWERLESS TO DO ANY-THING TO HELP.
I THOUGHT WE SHOULD BE APART BECAUSE ...
... IT WAS IMPOSSIBLE TO STAND BY AND DO NOTHING.
I THOUGHT IT WOULD BE EASIER THAT WAY.

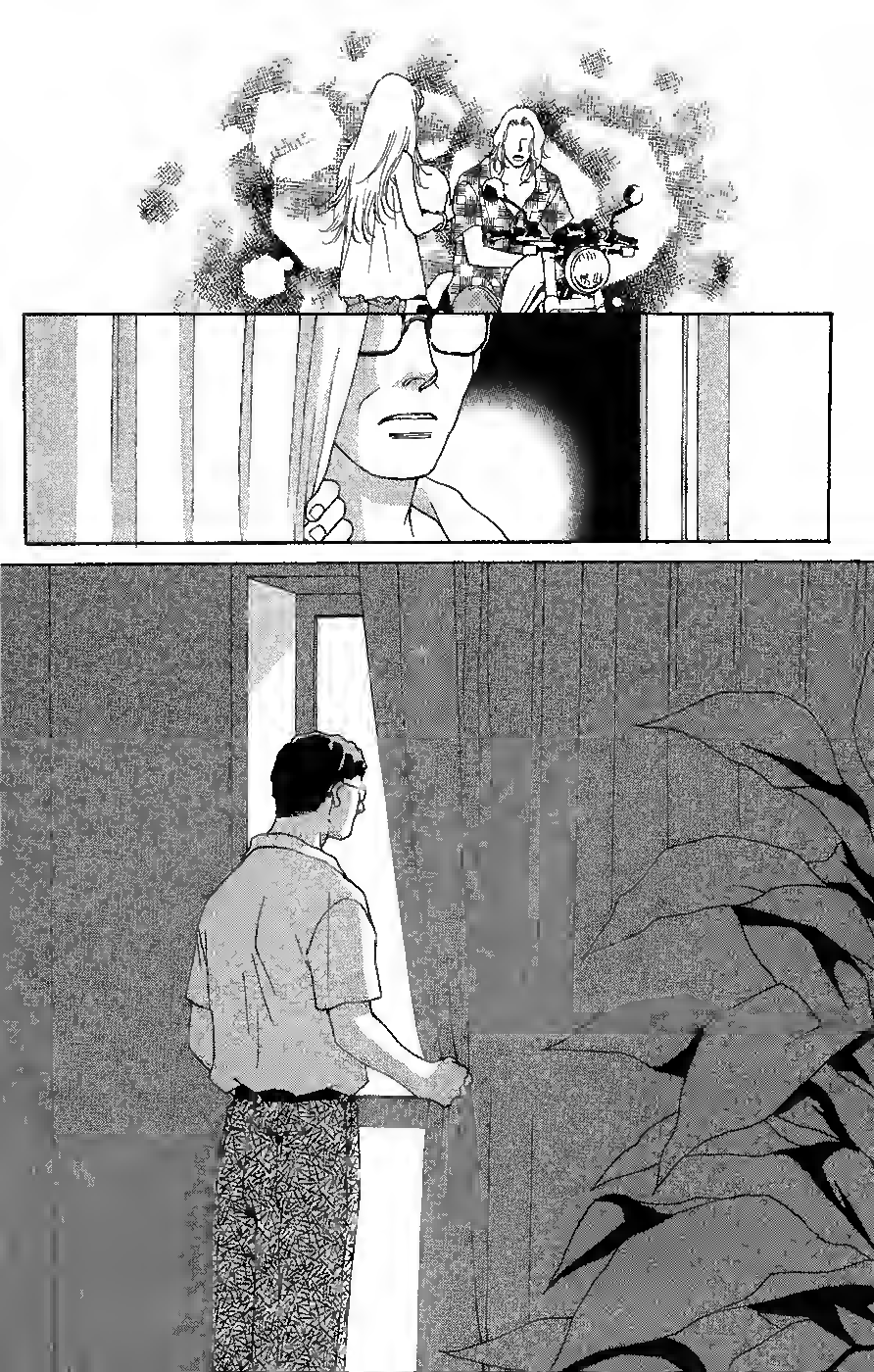

THAT WAS MY THEORY, ANYWAY.
BUT, IN REALITY, IT WAS EVEN TOUGHER BEING APART.

GET ON.
THE LAST TRAIN'S LEFT ALREADY.

IS IT REALLY OKAY?
SO THIS IS WHERE YOU LIVE NOW?
HE PUT A LOCK ON MY DOOR FOR ME.
I'VE DECIDED I'LL GET A JOB AFTER GRADUATION,
AND LEAVE HOME FOR GOOD.
SO...
OKAY, I GOT IT.

I BELIEVE YOU.
YOU KNOW, REI...
YOU WERE THE FIRST PERSON I EVER KISSED.


THAT WAS THE FIRST TIME I HAD BUTTERFLIES LIKE THAT.

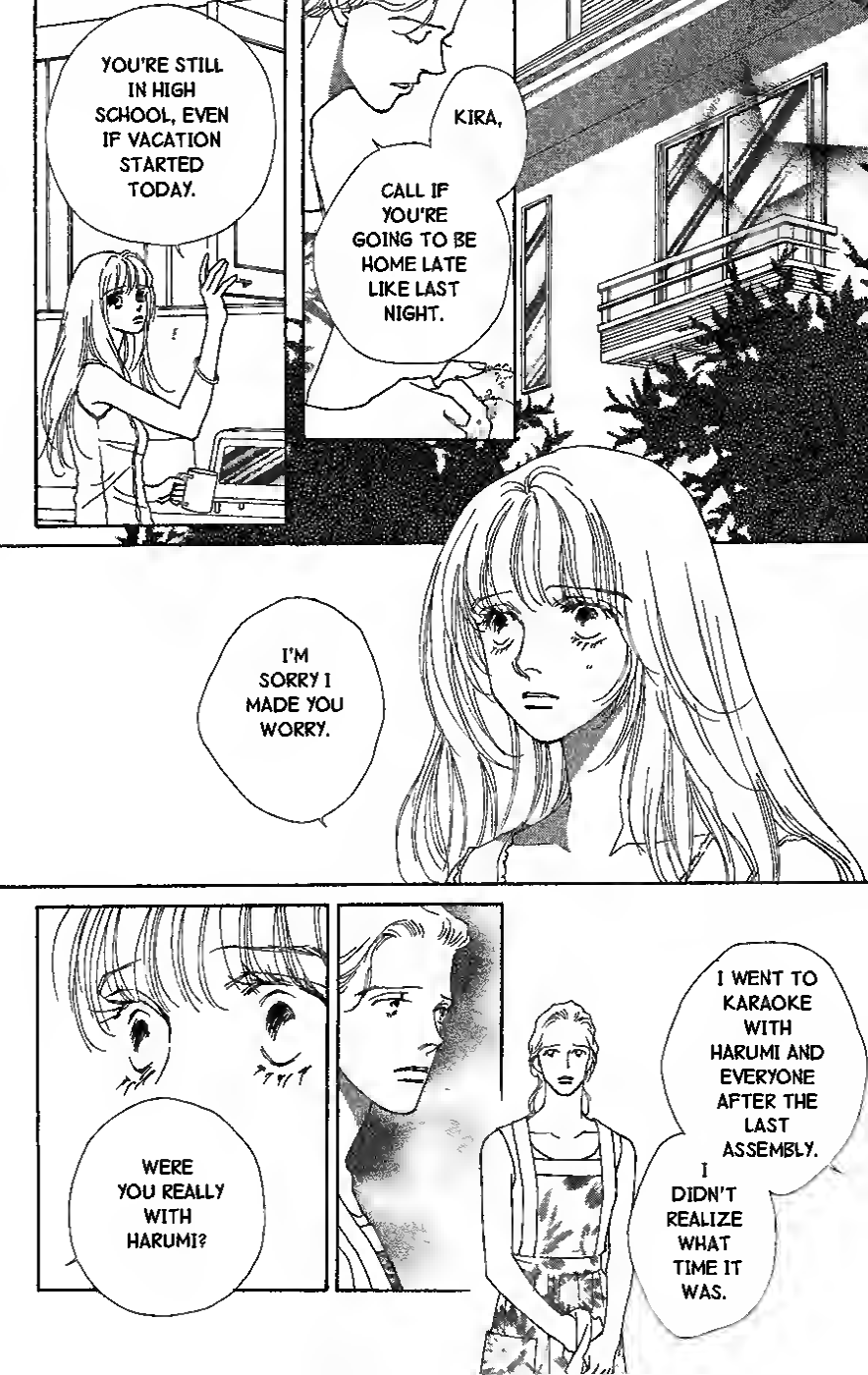


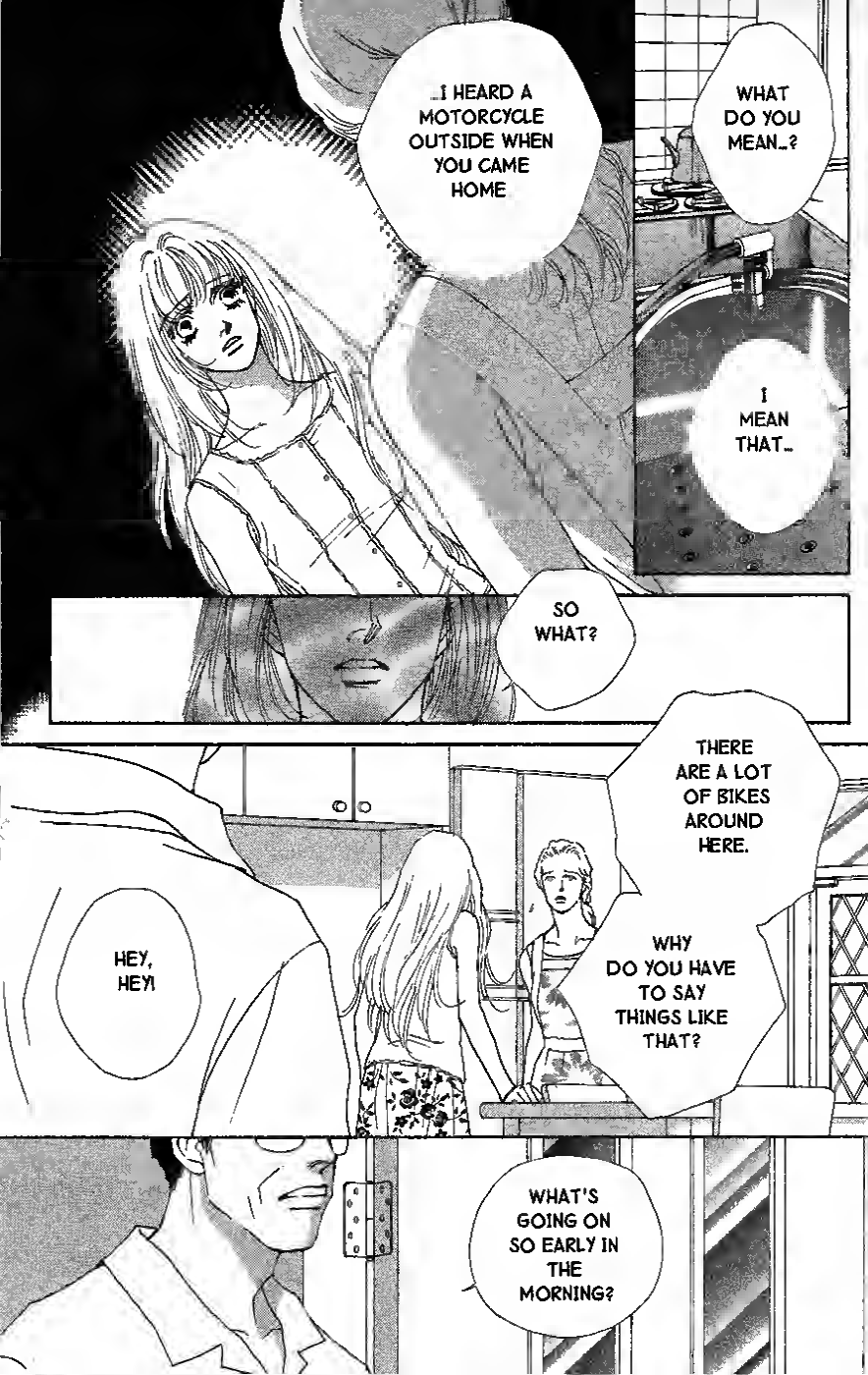
I WENT THROUGH ALL THAT STUFF...
...BUT I'D NEVER KISSED ANY-ONE BEFORE.
I ALWAYS PUSHED HIS FACE AWAY.
I WAS SCARED.

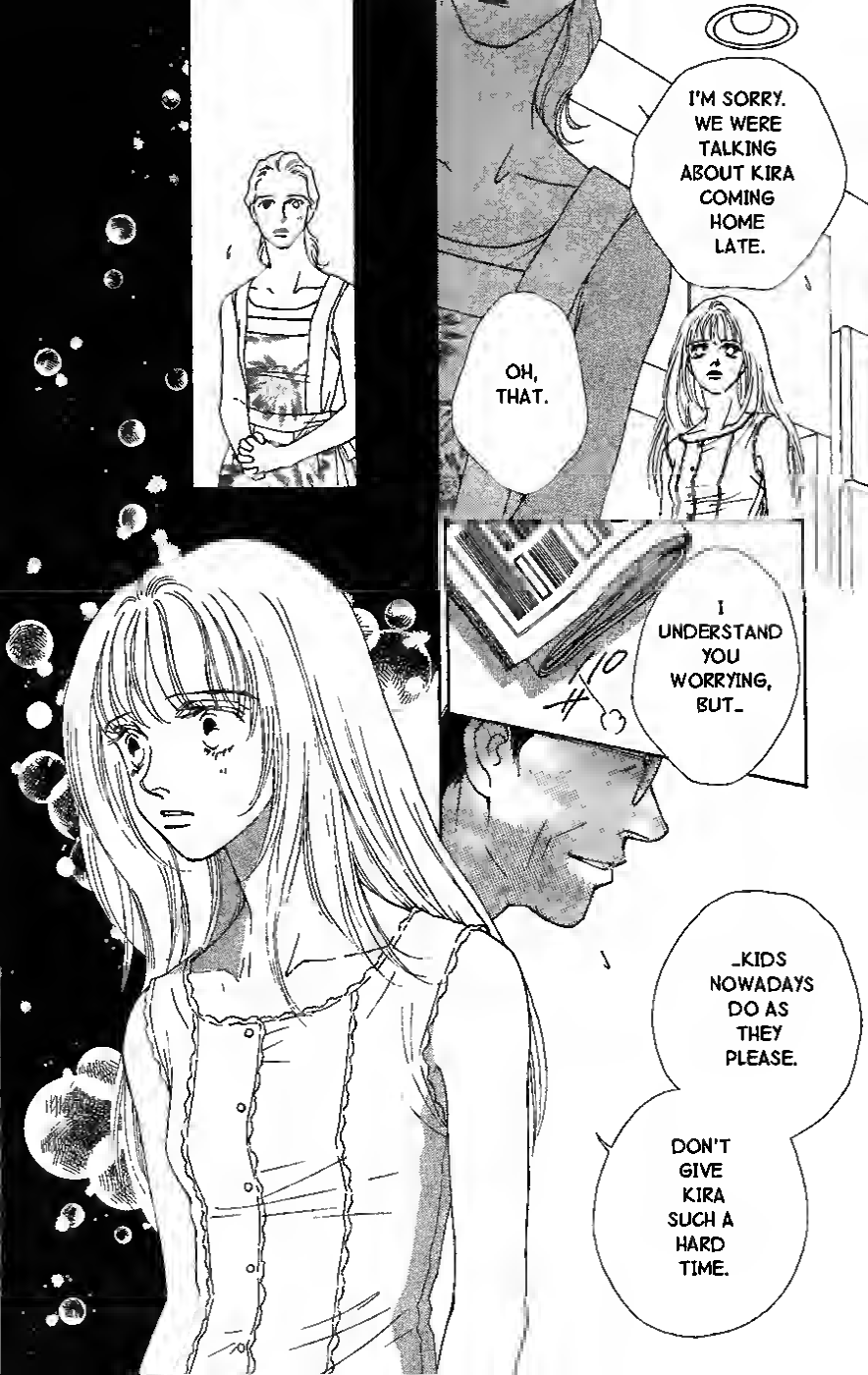
MARS

I ALWAYS THOUGHT A KISS...
...WAS JUST A GREETING.
BUT WHEN I KISSED YOU,
IT FELT LIKE I WAS DOING SOMETHING REALLY BAD.
IT WAS THE FIRST TIME I'D EVER FELT THAT WAY.

I WONDERED FOR A LONG TIME...
...WHY IT MADE ME FEEL THAT WAY.


YOU'RE STILL IN HIGH SCHOOL, EVEN IF VACATION STARTED TODAY.
KIRA,
CALL IF YOU'RE GOING TO BE HOME LATE LIKE LAST NIGHT.
I'M SORRY I MADE YOU WORRY.
I WENT TO KARAOKE WITH HARUMI AND EVERYONE AFTER THE LAST ASSEMBLY.
I DIDN'T REALIZE WHAT TIME IT WAS.
WERE YOU REALLY WITH HARUMI?


..I HEARD A MOTORCYCLE OUTSIDE WHEN YOU CAME HOME
WHAT DO YOU MEAN..?
I MEAN THAT..
SO WHAT?
THERE ARE A LOT OF BIKES AROUND HERE.
WHY DO YOU HAVE TO SAY THINGS LIKE THAT?
HEY, HEY!
WHAT'S GOING ON SO EARLY IN THE MORNING?


I'M SORRY. WE WERE TALKING ABOUT KIRA COMING HOME LATE.
OH, THAT.
I UNDERSTAND YOU WORRYING, BUT_
_KIDS NOWADAYS DO AS THEY PLEASE.
DON'T GIVE KIRA SUCH A HARD TIME.

HEEEY!
WHAT!?
YOU GOT BACK TOGETHER WITH KIRA!?

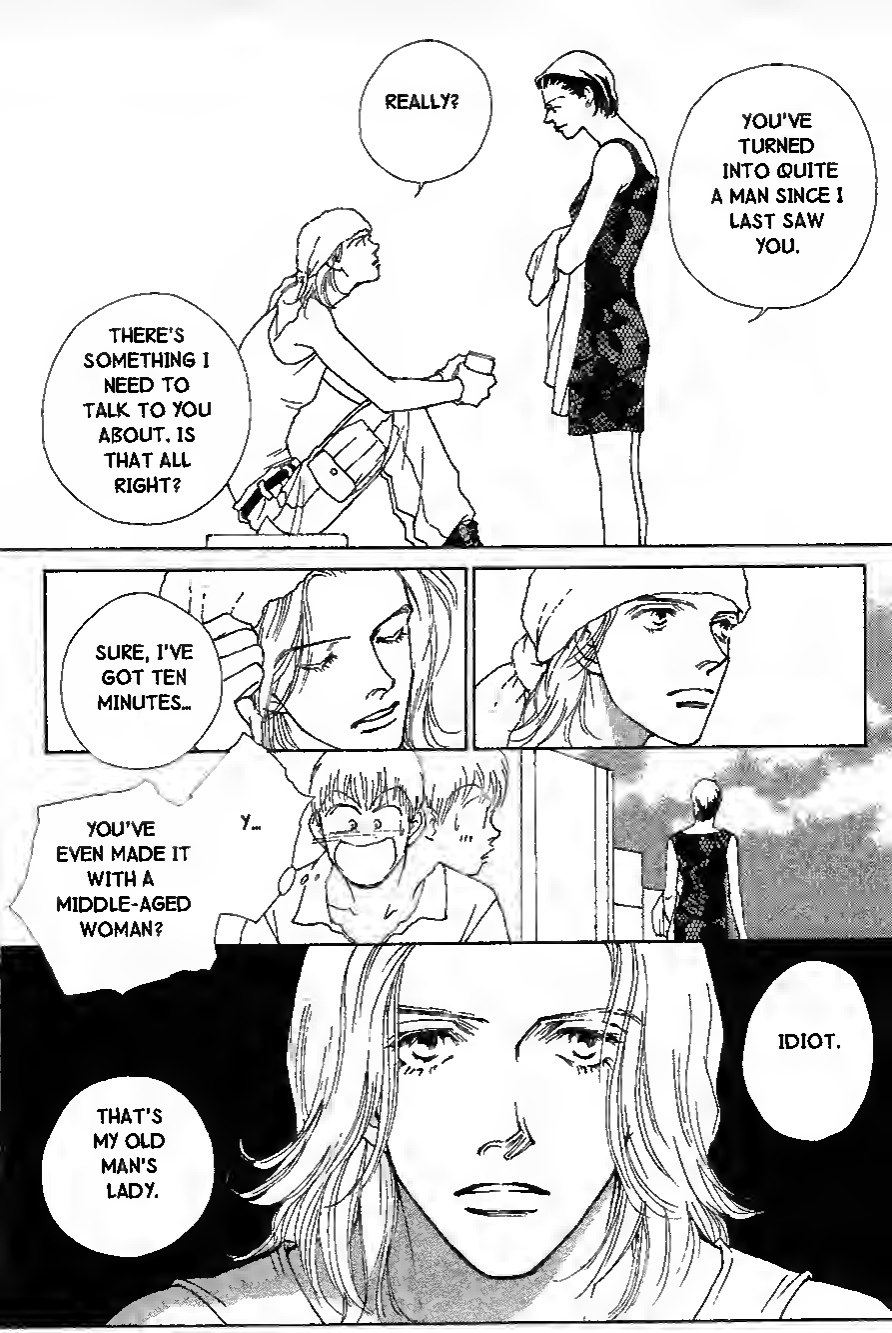
WHAAAAT!
I CAME TO CHEER YOU UP 'CAUSE I THOUGHT YOU'D BE DEPRESSED AFTER YESTERDAY.
SORRY, MAN.
A LOT OF SHIT HAPPENED,
BUT WE DECIDED TO GIVE IT ANOTHER TRY.
I'M SORRY TO CAUSE YOU AND HARUMI SO MUCH TROUBLE.
HARUMI WAS SAYING...
...THAT KIRA MIGHT'VE REALLY BEEN IN TROUBLE IF SHE HADN'T MET YOU.
!

YOU'RE AMAZING, MAN.
I THINK SO, TOO.
IF SHE WAS JUST LIKE SHE WAS BEFORE, SHE WOULDN'T BE ABLE TO HANDLE THE SITUATION NOW.
SHE CAN ONLY DEAL WITH IT BECAUSE YOU'RE THERE.
I KNOW HOW MUCH YOU MEAN TO KIRA...
...EVEN IF NO ONE ELSE IN THE WORLD DOES.
I DON'T CARE ABOUT THE REST OF THE WORLD, BUT...

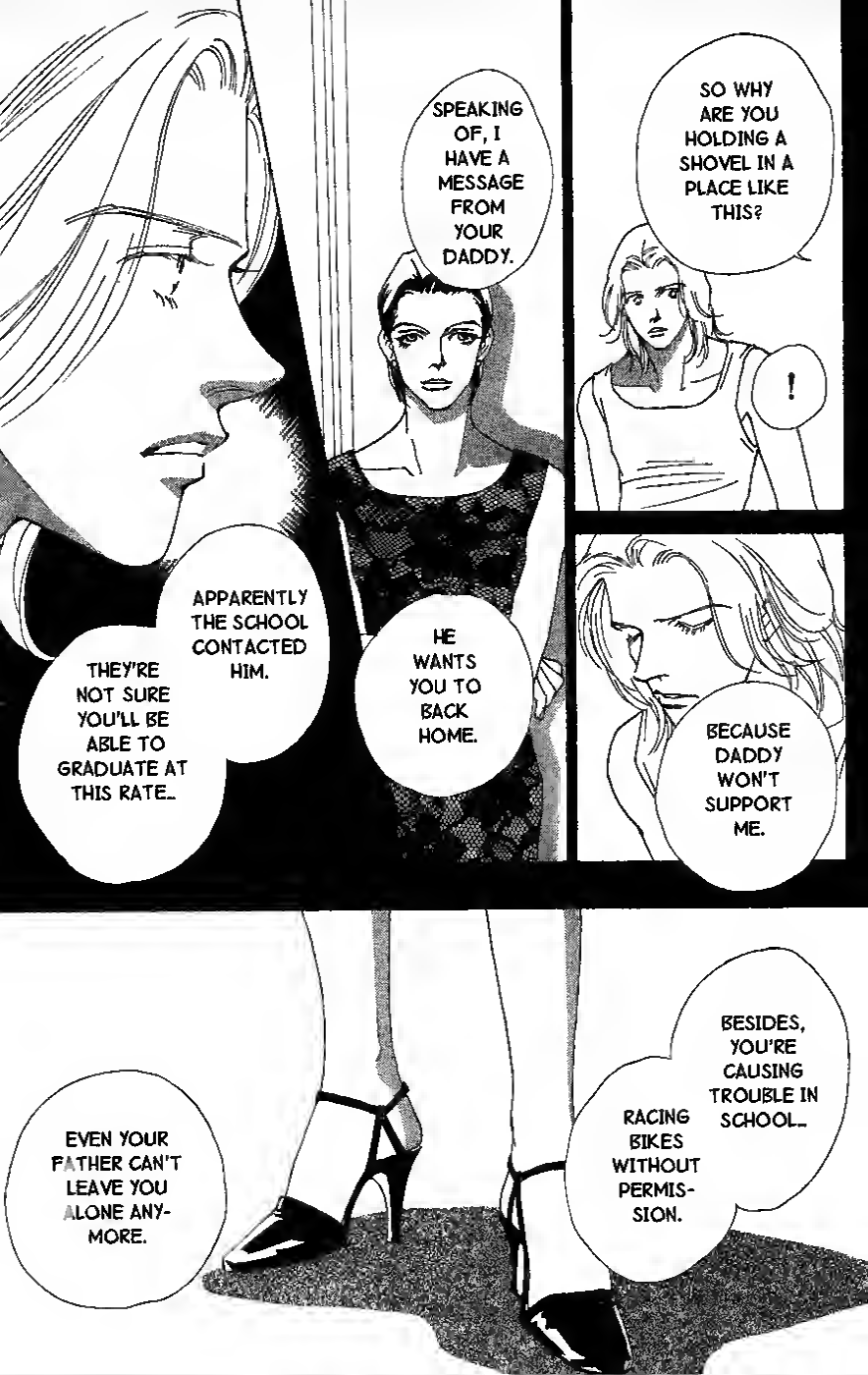
I DON'T THINK SHE LIKES ME VERY MUCH.
?
...I WANT KIRA'S MOTHER TO KNOW, AT LEAST.
IT'S A HUGE STRIKE FOR ME THAT I RIDE A MOTORCYCLE.
!
OH, YEAH.
KIRA'S DAD DIED IN A CAR ACCIDENT, DIDN'T HE?
IN HER MOTHER'S EYES, I'M NOT MUCH DIFFERENT...
...FROM THAT MOTORCYCLE GANG THAT WAS GOING AROUND TERRORIZING THE STREETS.

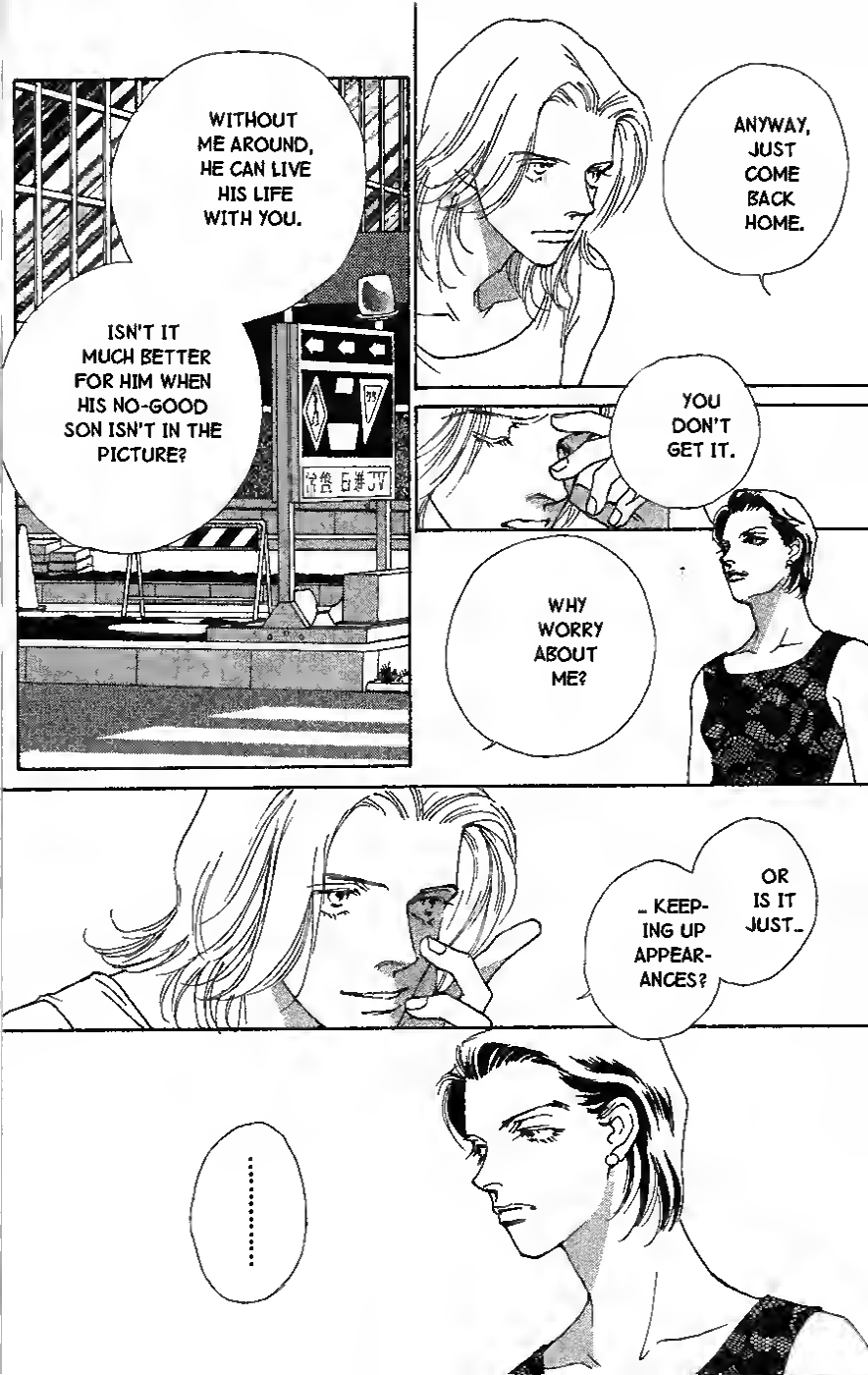
I CAN SEE THAT..
..EVEN THOUGH YOU'RE REALLY SUCH A GREAT GUY.
RIGHT.
YOUR ONLY FLAW IS THAT YOU'RE A PLAYBOY.
RIGHT..
OH SHIT, LOOK WHO IT IS!

IT'S BEEN A WHILE,
REI.
SONOKO.


REALLY?
YOU'VE TURNED INTO QUITE A MAN SINCE I LAST SAW YOU.
THERE'S SOMETHING I NEED TO TALK TO YOU ABOUT. IS THAT ALL RIGHT?
SURE, I'VE GOT TEN MINUTES...
Y...
YOU'VE EVEN MADE IT WITH A MIDDLE-AGED WOMAN?
IDIOT.
THAT'S MY OLD MAN'S LADY.

SO...
WHAT DO YOU WANT? YOU CAME ALL THE WAY OUT HERE...
DON'T LOOK SO UNHAPPY.
JUST BECAUSE I'M A MIDDLE-AGED WOMAN...
HMMM.
YOU DON'T LOOK TOO BAD IN WORK CLOTHES.
IT'S NICE TO SEE A WORKING MAN.
BUT AREN'T YOU STILL IN SCHOOL?


SO WHY ARE YOU HOLDING A SHOVEL IN A PLACE LIKE THIS?
!
SPEAKING OF, I HAVE A MESSAGE FROM YOUR DADDY.
HE WANTS YOU TO BACK HOME.
BECAUSE DADDY WON'T SUPPORT ME.
APPARENTLY THE SCHOOL CONTACTED HIM.
THEY'RE NOT SURE YOU'LL BE ABLE TO GRADUATE AT THIS RATE..
BESIDES, YOU'RE CAUSING TROUBLE IN SCHOOL..
RACING BIKES WITHOUT PERMIS-SION.
EVEN YOUR FATHER CAN'T LEAVE YOU ALONE ANY-MORE.


ANYWAY, JUST COME BACK HOME.
YOU DON'T GET IT.
WHY WORRY ABOUT ME?
WITHOUT ME AROUND, HE CAN LIVE HIS LIFE WITH YOU.
ISN'T IT MUCH BETTER FOR HIM WHEN HIS NO-GOOD SON ISN'T IN THE PICTURE?
OR IS IT JUST...
...KEEPING UP APPEARANCES?
.....

YOU'RE ONLY SEVENTEEN. YOU'RE STILL IMMATURE, BOTH EMOTIONALLY AND PHYSICALLY.
YOU STILL NEED SOMEONE TO LOOK AFTER YOU.
YOU REALLY DON'T UNDERSTAND.
IN OTHER WORDS, YOU'RE STILL A CHILD.

WHY NOT JUST BE TRUE TO YOUR FEELINGS?
YOUR FATHER DOESN'T THINK OF YOU AS A BOTHER AT ALL...
...AND I DON'T EITHER.
CONSTRUCTION COMPANY
保工区建設工事
株式会社
IF THERE'S ANYTHING I CAN DO, JUST LET ME KNOW.
I'LL DO WHATEVER I CAN TO HELP.
SO THEN...
OF COURSE.
REALLY?

LET ME DO YOU.

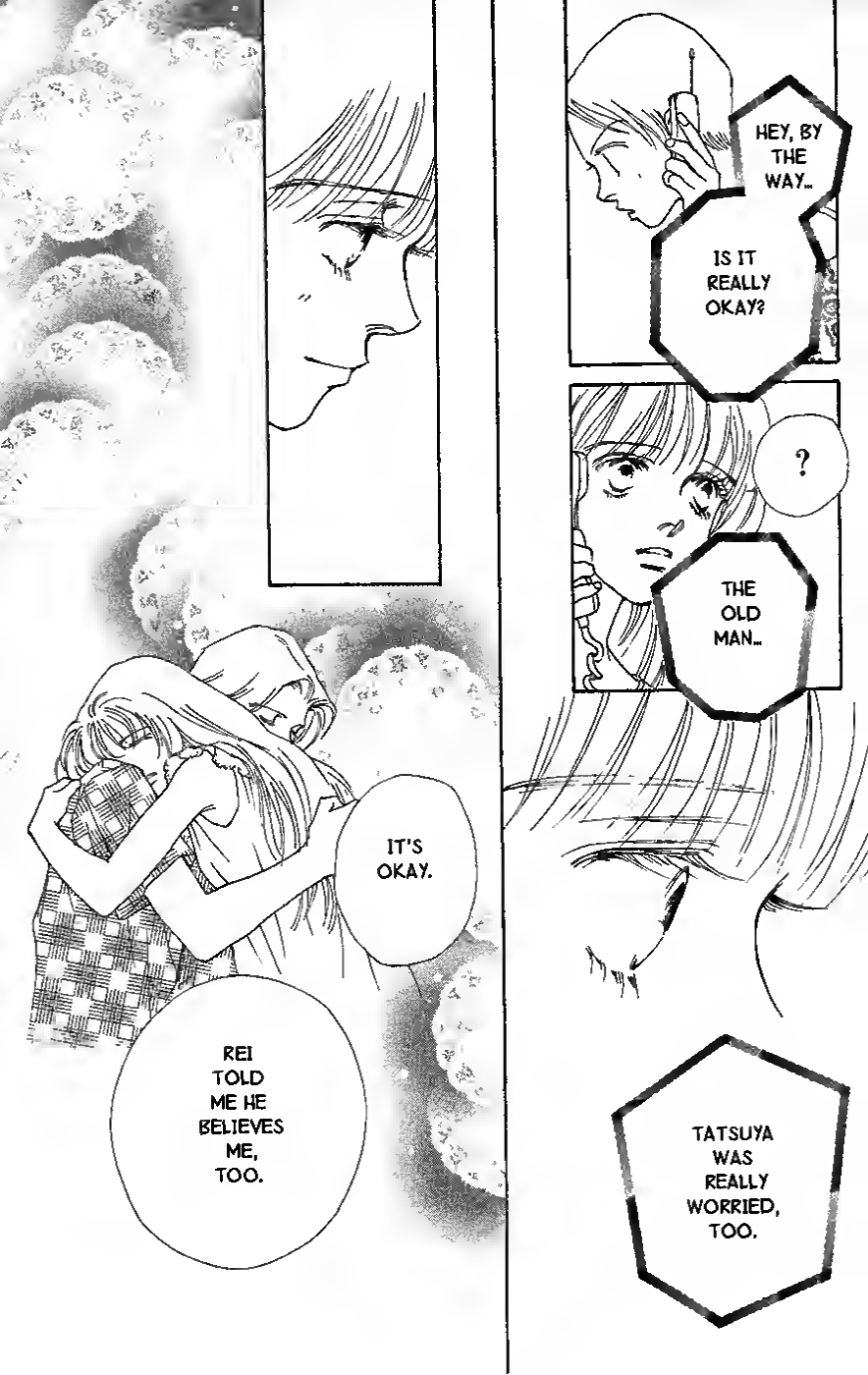
SURE.
WHENEVER YOU LIKE.
BUT...
...I HOPE YOU CAN SATISFY ME.

EXCUSE ME FOR ASKING.
LOOK, STOP RUNNING AWAY.
YOU HAVE TO SIT DOWN FACE TO FACE WITH YOUR FATHER.
HEY, COULD YOU RELAY THIS TO THE OLD MAN?

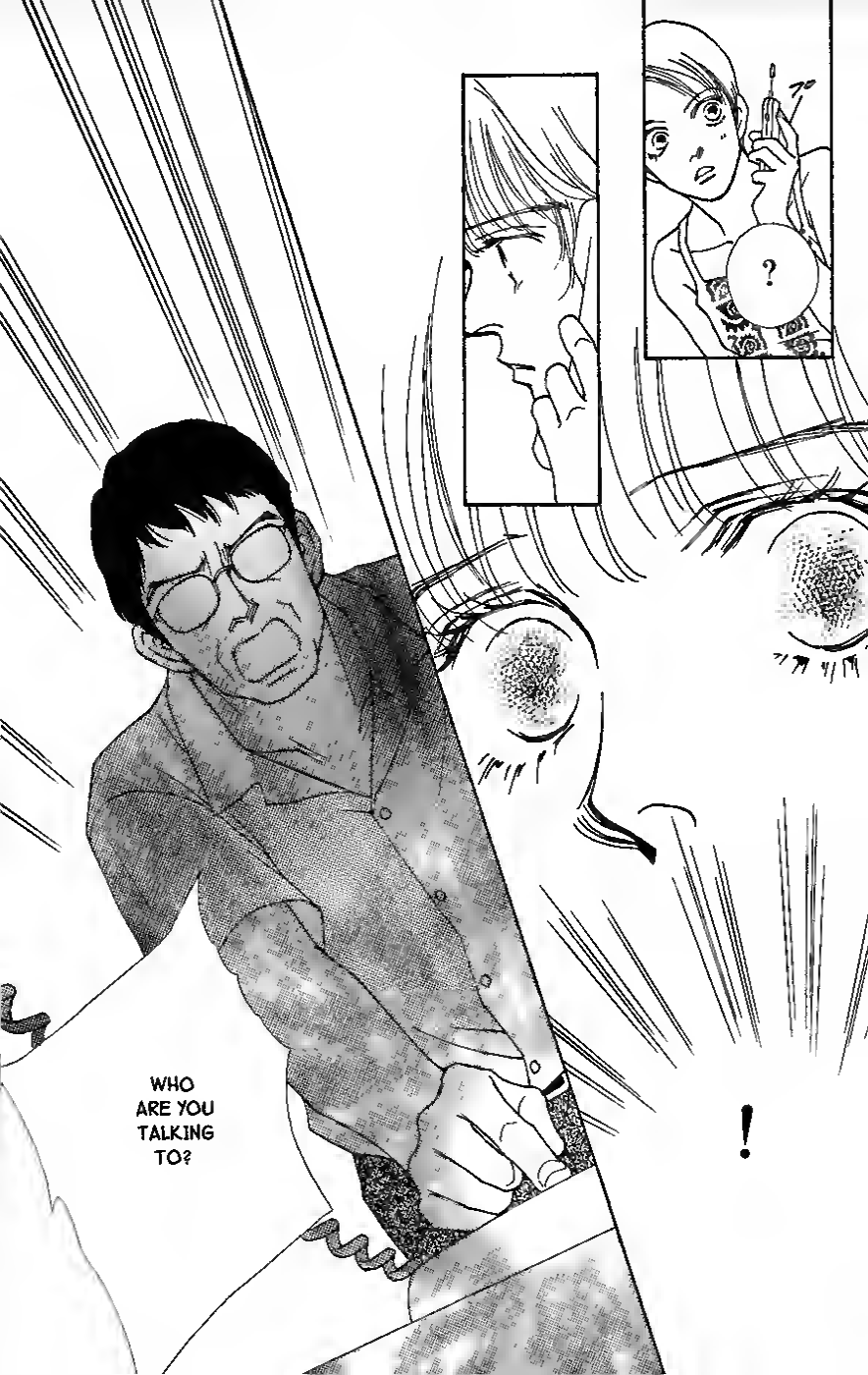
WE'RE NOT REALLY FATHER AND SON ANYWAY.
TELL HIM THAT HE DOESN'T HAVE TO TRY SO HARD.

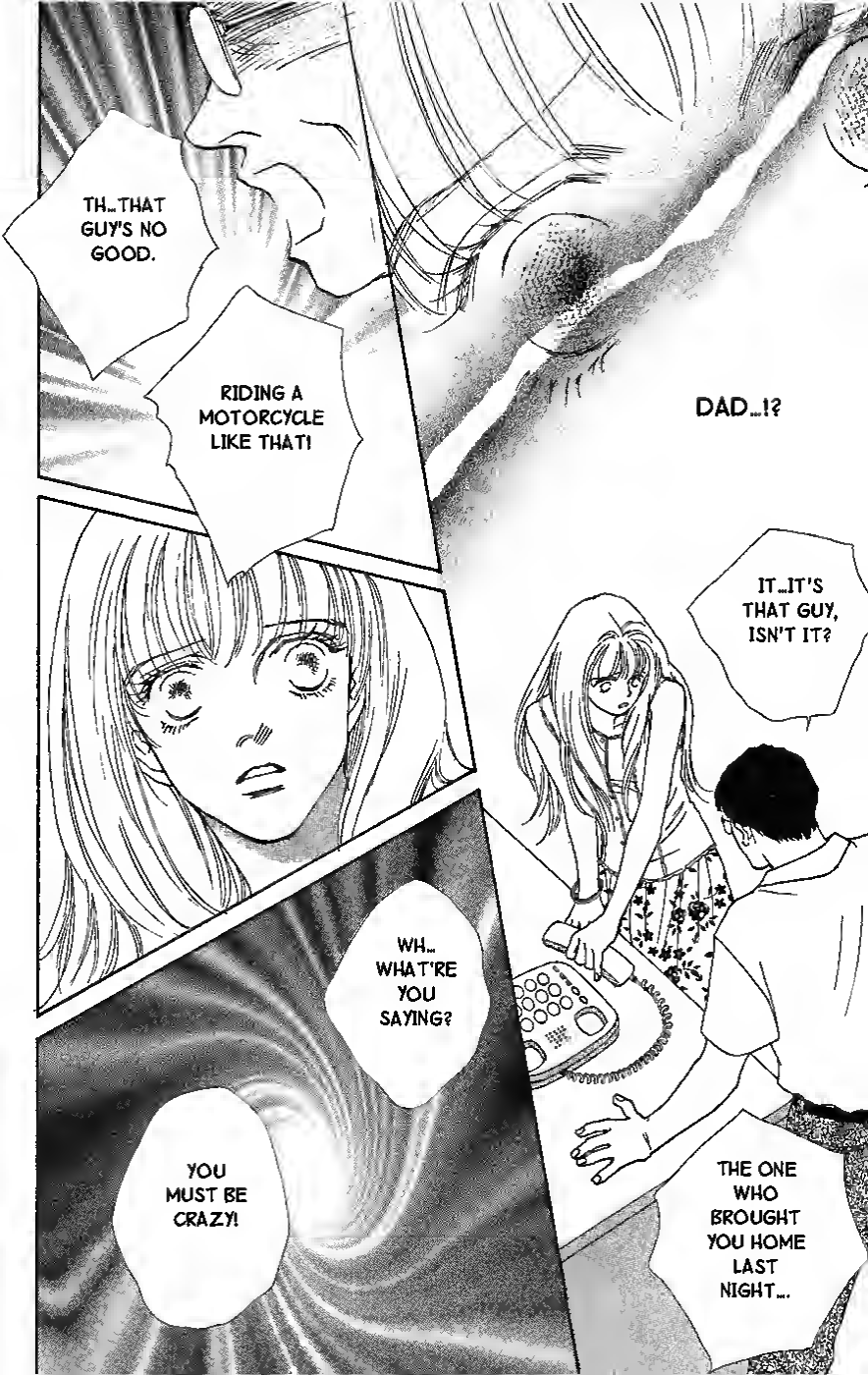
I'M TAKING YOUR MOTHER TO THE HOSPITAL, SO PLEASE LOOK AFTER THE HOUSE, KIRA.
IT'S ONLY AN OUT-PATIENT VISIT. I CAN TAKE THE BUS.
WHAT ARE YOU SAYING? DON'T WORRY ABOUT IT.
プルルル
プルルル
!

I'M SO GLAD THINGS ARE BACK TO NORMAL.
BUT I KNEW IT WOULD HAPPEN ALL ALONG, EVEN IF TATSUYA DIDN'T BELIEVE ME.
I KNEW REI WOULD NEEEVER BE ABLE TO JUST FORGET ABOUT YOU.
HELLO, KIRA!?
HARUMI!
I HEARD, I HEARD.
YOU GUYS ARE BACK TOGETHER?
TATSUYA CALLED ME EARLIER.
GOD, YOU REALLY HAD ME WORRIED!
I'M SORRY.
I REALLY AM.


HEY, BY THE WAY..
IS IT REALLY OKAY?
?
THE OLD MAN..
TATSUYA WAS REALLY WORRIED, TOO.
IT'S OKAY.
REI TOLD ME HE BELIEVES ME, TOO.

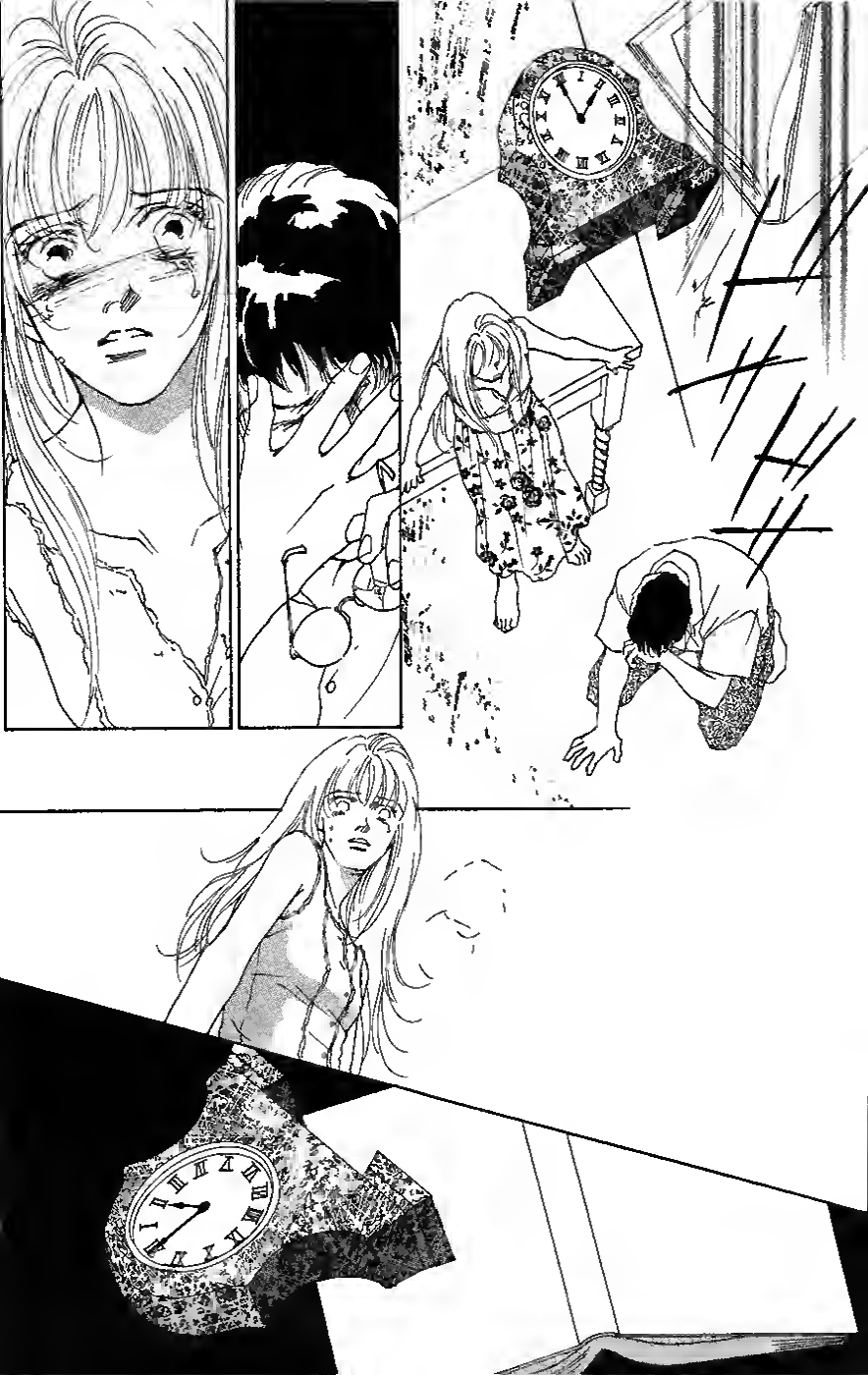
MY STEPFATHER JUST BROUGHT MY MOTHER TO THE HOSPITAL.
WHEN I SAW THEM LEAVING, I REALIZED HOW MUCH MY MOTHER JUST WANTED SOMEONE TO PROTECT HER.
SO MAYBE THE THREE OF US CAN MOVE ON AND BE A GOOD FAMILY TOGETHER...
I ALWAYS THOUGHT I WAS THE ONLY ONE HAVING A HARD TIME,
BUT MY MOTHER WAS REALLY LONELY, TOO.

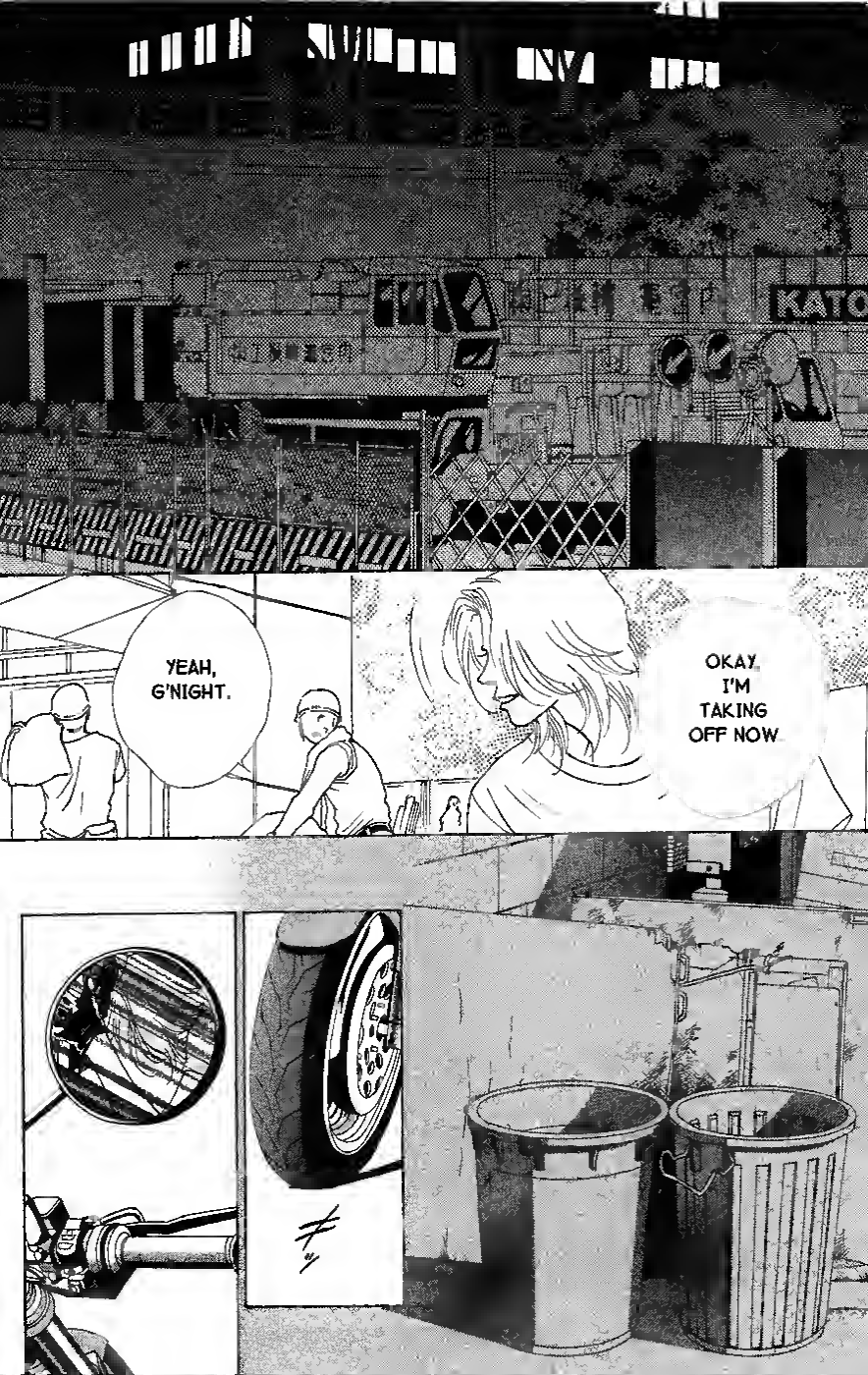

?
!
WHO ARE YOU TALKING TO?


TH...THAT GUY'S NO GOOD.
RIDING A MOTORCYCLE LIKE THAT!
DAD...!?
IT...IT'S THAT GUY, ISN'T IT?
WH... WHAT'RE YOU SAYING?
YOU MUST BE CRAZY!
THE ONE WHO BROUGHT YOU HOME LAST NIGHT...

I'M ONLY THINKING OF YOU.
BECAUSE I'M WORRIED ABOUT YOU.
WHY ARE YOU SAYING THOSE THINGS!?
WHAT RIGHT DO YOU HAVE...?
HE'S WORTHLESS...
HE DOESN'T SUIT YOU.
DON'T SEE THAT GUY ANYMORE!

NOOOOOO!
KIRA?!




KATO
YEAH, G'NIGHT.
OKAY. I'M TAKING OFF NOW.
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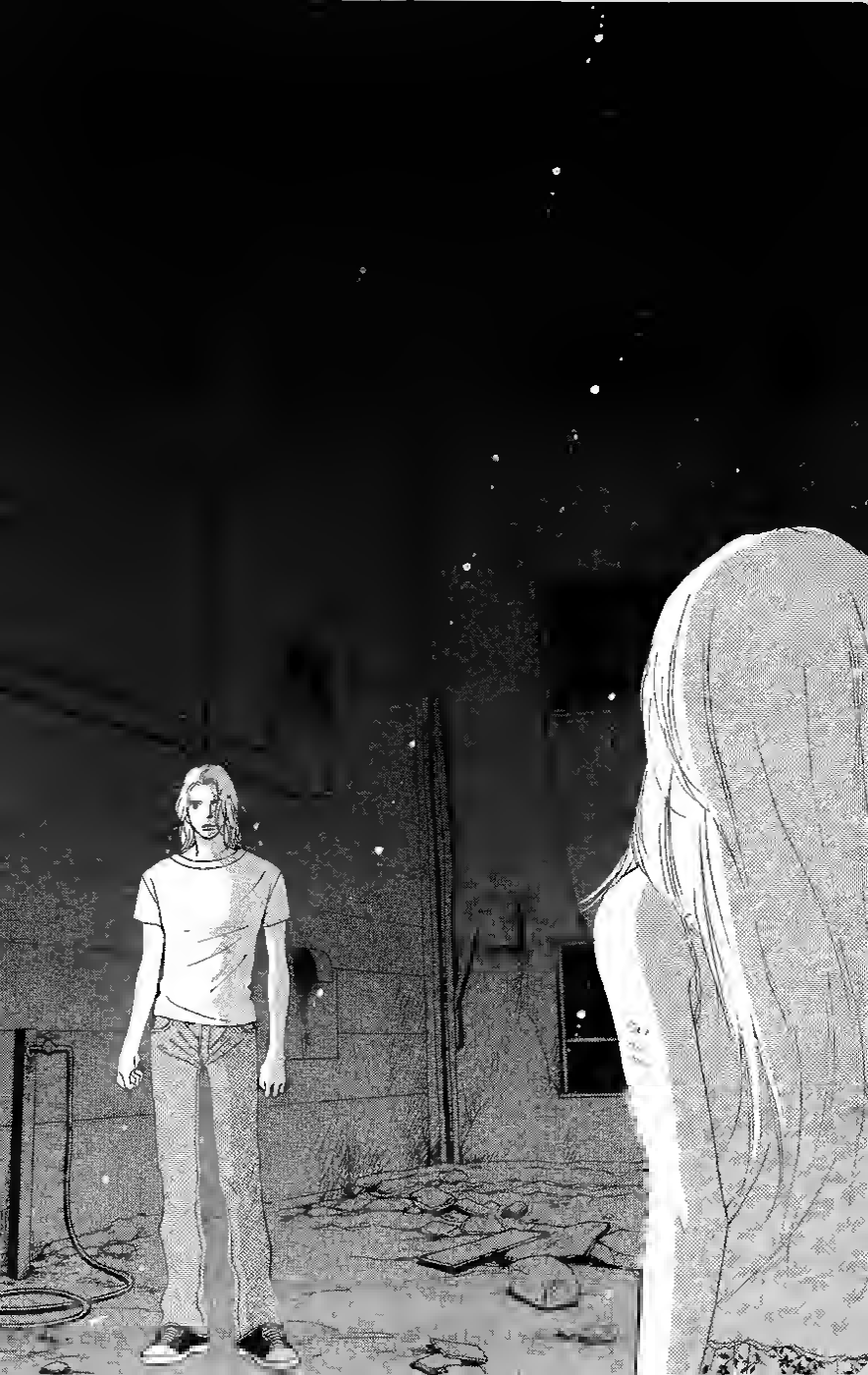
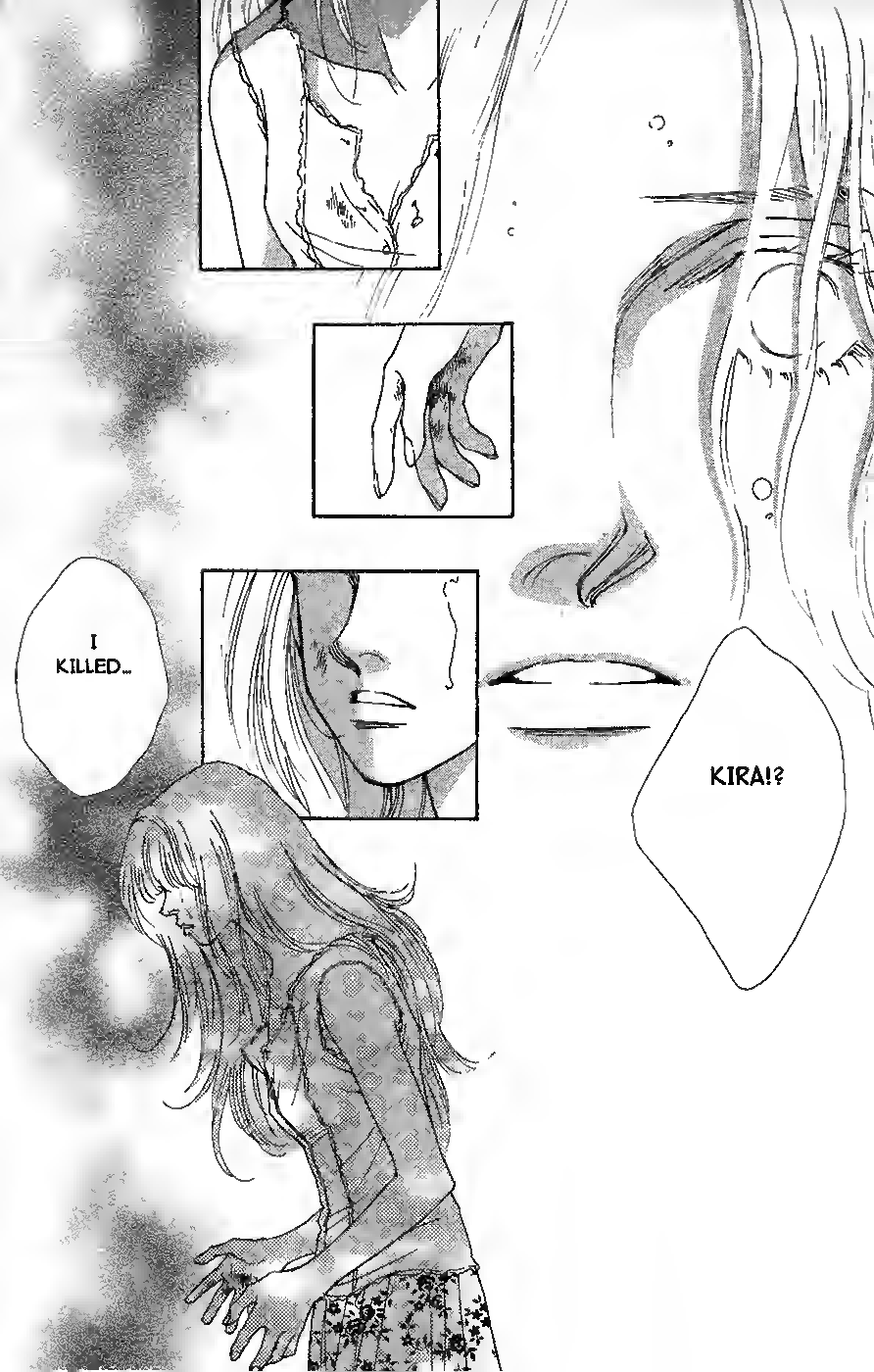



I KILLED...
KIRA!?

I...
I...
I'VE KILLED THAT MAN...

MARS

I...
I KILLED THAT MAN WITH THESE HANDS!
I'VE KILLED HIM.

HEY, LET'S GO UP TO MY APARTMENT.
..YOU KILLED..?
WHAT DO YOU MEAN..
!

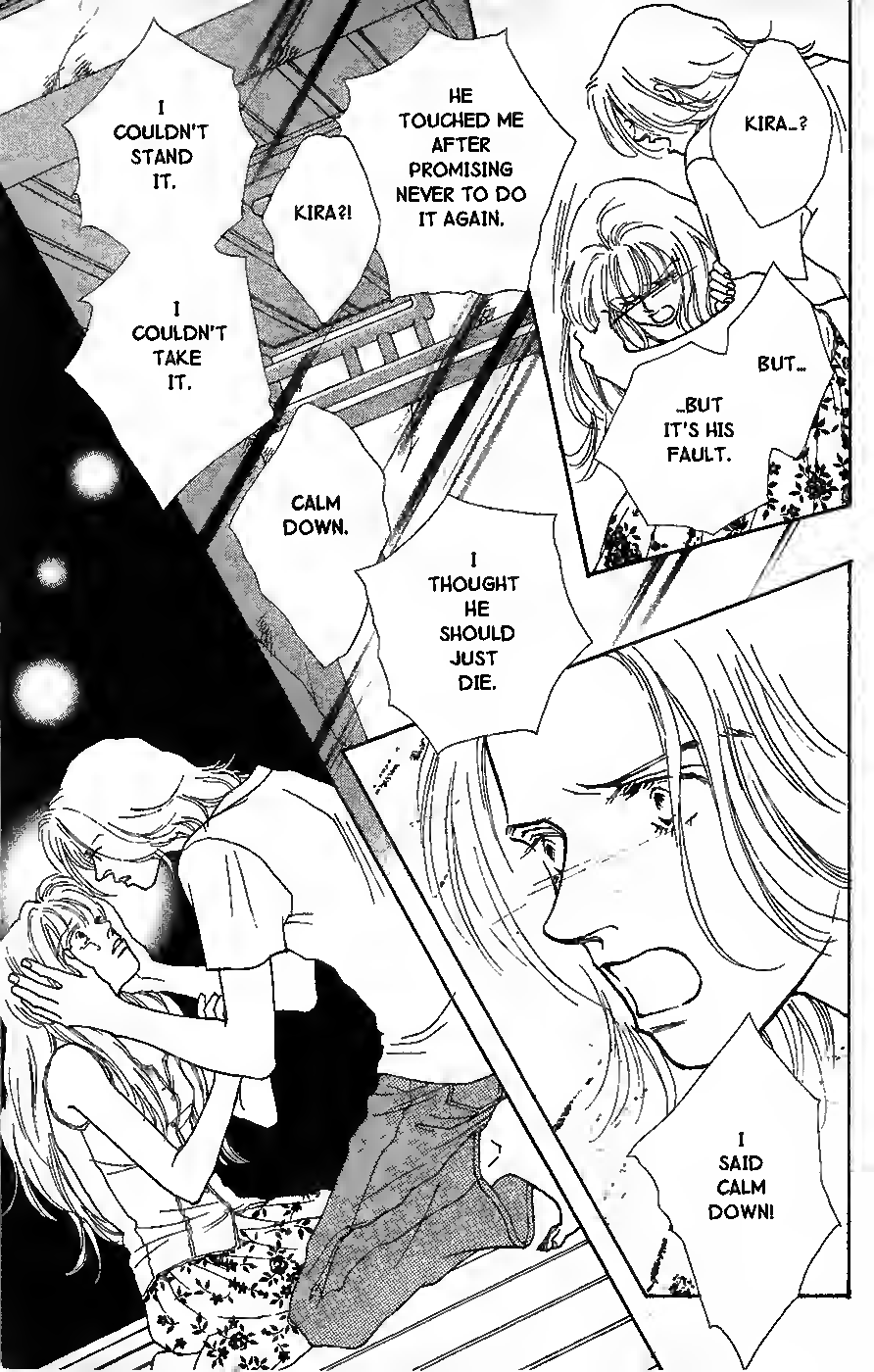
カチ
WHAT HAPPENED..?
WHAT THE HELL HAPPENED?
HE'S CRAZY!
HE SAID I CAN'T SEE YOU ANYMORE.
HE MUST BE CRAZY TO SAY SUCH A THING!

HE... TOOK CARE OF MY MOTHER AND ME...
...AND WE'RE GRATEFUL, BUT...
...BUT THAT DOESN'T MEAN HE OWNS ME.
I'M STILL ME, AND...
YOU...
DID HE DO SOME THING TO YOU?
HE JUST STARTED GRABBING ME...
...AND I SHOVED HIM AS HARD AS I COULD, AND...
NOTHING.
HE DIDN'T DO ANYTHING, BUT...

I WANTED HIM TO DISAP-PEAR!
I NEVER WANTED TO SEE HIM EVER AGAIN! EVER!

BUT BY THE TIME I REALIZED WHAT I WAS DOING, HE WAS LYING ON THE FLOOR, ALL BLOODY...
DID YOU KILL HIM?
YES...
...BECAUSE UNLESS I DID THAT, I THOUGHT HE WOULD JUST GET UP AND...
I WAS SCARED.
I WAS SO SCARED!

THAT'S WHY I WANTED TO ERASE HIM.
BUT HE DIDN'T DISAPPEAR! HE WAS JUST BLEEDING AND BLEEDING.
OH GOD, I KILLED HIM.
WHAT AM I GOING TO DO?


KIRA...?
HE TOUCHED ME AFTER PROMISING NEVER TO DO IT AGAIN.
I COULDN'T STAND IT.
KIRA?!
I COULDN'T TAKE IT.
BUT...
...BUT IT'S HIS FAULT.
CALM DOWN.
I THOUGHT HE SHOULD JUST DIE.
I SAID CALM DOWN!

DID YOU KILL HIM...
...FOR REAL?
BUT...
...THERE WAS ALL THIS BLOOD.
HE WOULDN'T MOVE EVEN WHEN I SAID HIS NAME OVER AND OVER...

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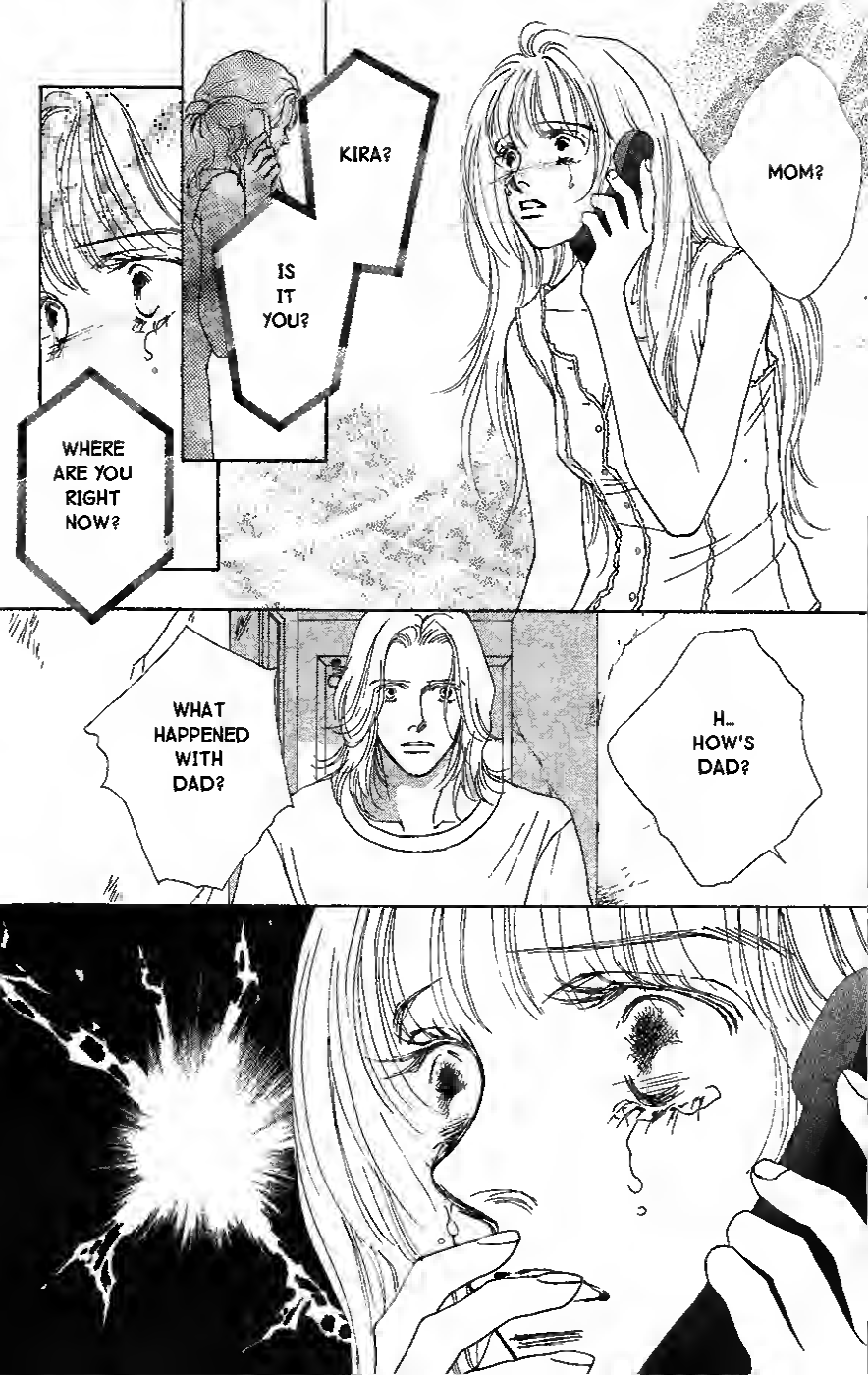
!
HELLO...
HELLO?


KIRA?
IS IT YOU?
WHERE ARE YOU RIGHT NOW?
MOM?
WHAT HAPPENED WITH DAD?
H... HOW'S DAD?

!
HE LOST A LOT OF BLOOD, BUT IT WAS JUST A CONCUSSION.
HE'S AT THE HOSPITAL GETTING TREATED.
HE'S OKAY.
..ALIVE..
SHE SAID THAT HE..
..IS ALIVE.

HE FEELS AWFUL FOR SCARING YOU LIKE THAT.
HE WAS JUST WORRIED ABOUT YOU AND ENDED UP GOING TOO FAR.
HE WASN'T GOING TO TRY ANYTHING. HE JUST WANTS YOU TO FORGIVE HIM.
WHERE ARE YOU RIGHT NOW, KIRA?
PLEASE. LET'S TALK THIS OVER TOGETHER.
TALK WHAT OVER?
YOUR FATHER THINKS YOU'RE PROBABLY OVERREACT-ING...
HE WANTS TO CLARIFY THE SITUA-TION.

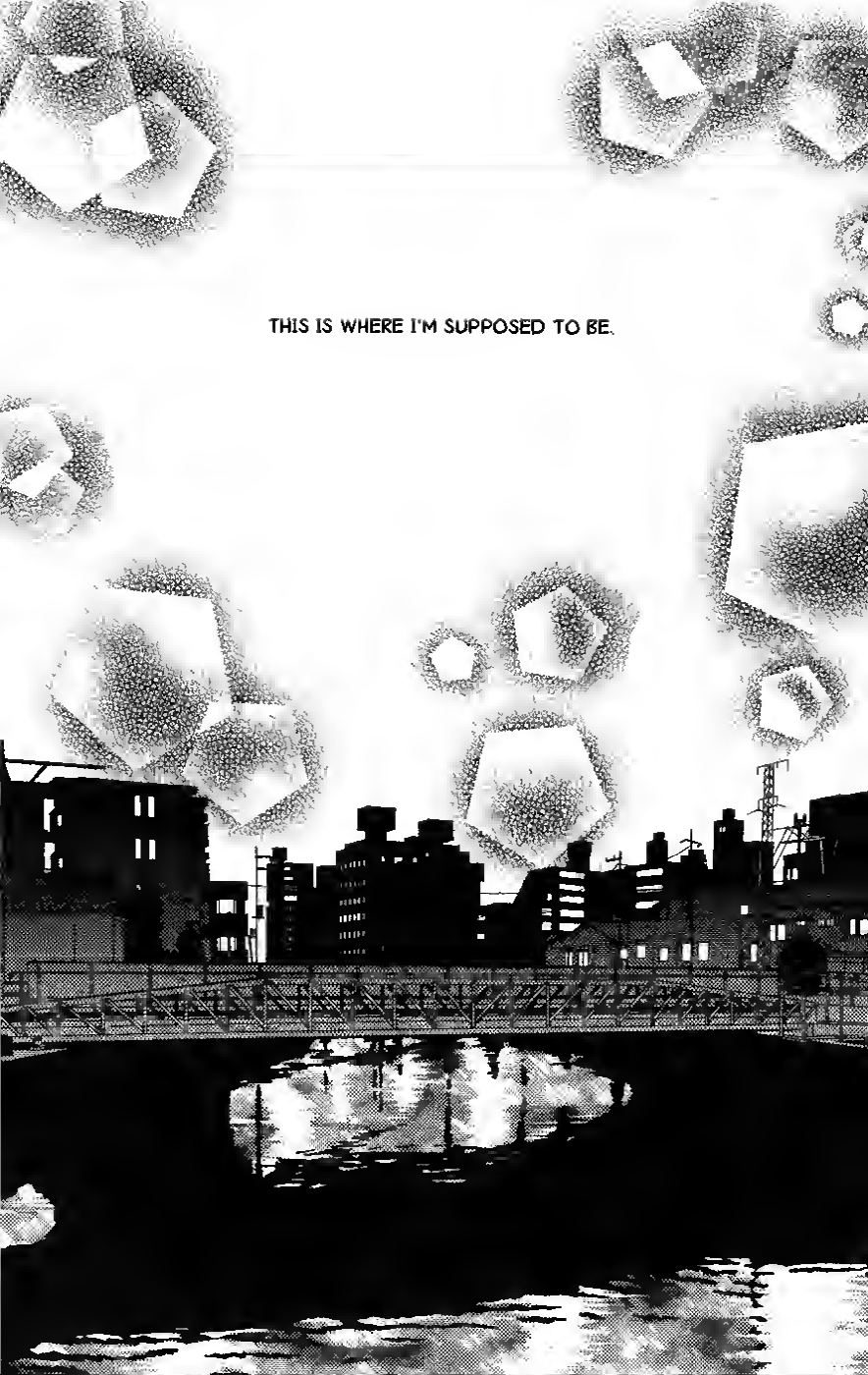
DO YOU BELIEVE WHAT THAT MAN SAYS?
.....
I'VE HAD ENOUGH TROUBLE.
KIRA,
I'M JUST TIRED.
I'D LIKE TO GO BACK TO HOW THINGS WERE.
I'D LIKE TO.

I WANT TO GO BACK TO THE CALM AND PEACEFUL DAYS WE USED TO HAVE.
MOM...
...WE CAN'T GO BACK TO HOW THINGS WERE.
ALL WE HAVE IS THE REALITY IN FRONT OF US.
NO MATTER HOW HARD IT IS...
...I'M NOT LOOKING BACK.

GOODBYE.
KIRA?
カチ.
HOME ISN'T A PLACE FOR ME ANYMORE.

ALWAYS...

MY WHOLE LIFE, I'VE LOOKED FOR THIS.


THIS IS WHERE I'M SUPPOSED TO BE.

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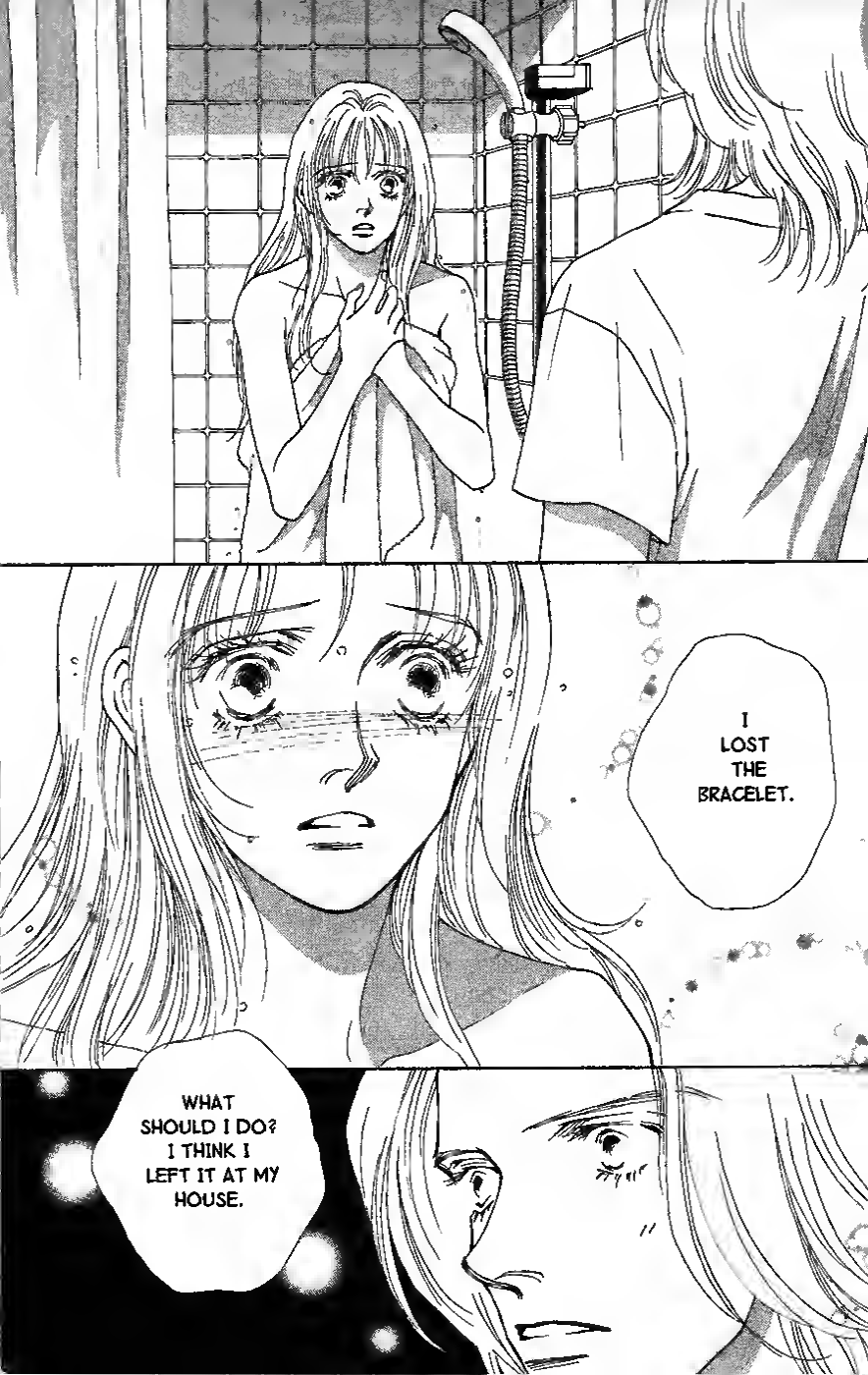
!

THE BRACELET?!
REI!
WHAT'S WRONG, KIRA?
REI!


I LOST THE BRACELET.
WHAT SHOULD I DO? I THINK I LEFT IT AT MY HOUSE.

IT PROBABLY CAME OFF WHEN I HIT MY STEPFATHER.
I DIDN'T EVEN NOTICE UNTIL NOW.
IT WAS MY LUCKY BRACELET YOU GAVE ME.
.....
WELL, YOU'RE SAFE, SO...
..WHO CARES ABOUT THE BRACELET?
OH.
LOOK, WHY DON'T YOU JUST PUT ON SOME CLOTHES?
!

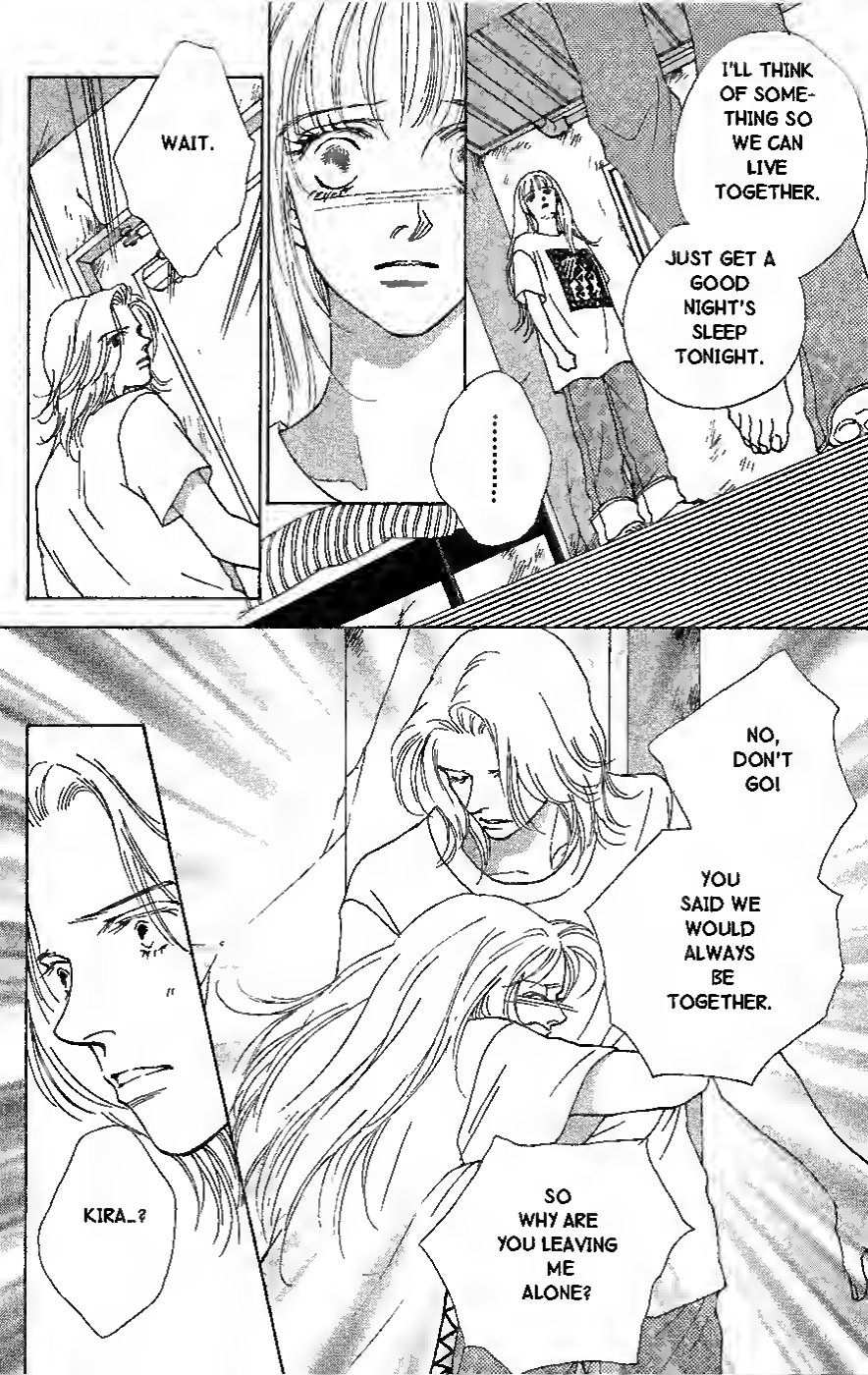
OKAY.

YOU'RE LOOKING PRETTY HIP.

WELL, LET'S TRY TO MAKE DO WITH MY CLOTHES FOR NOW.
ARE YOU SURE I CAN STAY HERE?
!
OH..
WELL, IT'S NOT LIKE I HAVE ANYWHERE ELSE TO GO.
I DON'T HAVE A TV OR RADIO,
AND SOMETIMES THERE'S NO HOT WATER.
BUT IF YOU DON'T MIND ALL THAT..

I CAN BE ANYWHERE AS LONG AS I'M WITH YOU.

?
WELL, I'M GONNA GO OVER TO TATSUYA'S...
...SO MAKE YOURSELF COMFORT-ABLE IN THE BED.
WHY ARE YOU GOING TO TATSUYA'S?
!
WELL, WE CAN'T HAVE TWO PEOPLE IN THIS BED...
...AND I DON'T HAVE ANY OTHER SHEETS OR MATS.


WAIT.
I'LL THINK OF SOMETHING SO WE CAN LIVE TOGETHER.
JUST GET A GOOD NIGHT'S SLEEP TONIGHT.
.....
NO, DON'T GO!
YOU SAID WE WOULD ALWAYS BE TOGETHER.
SO WHY ARE YOU LEAVING ME ALONE?
KIRA_?

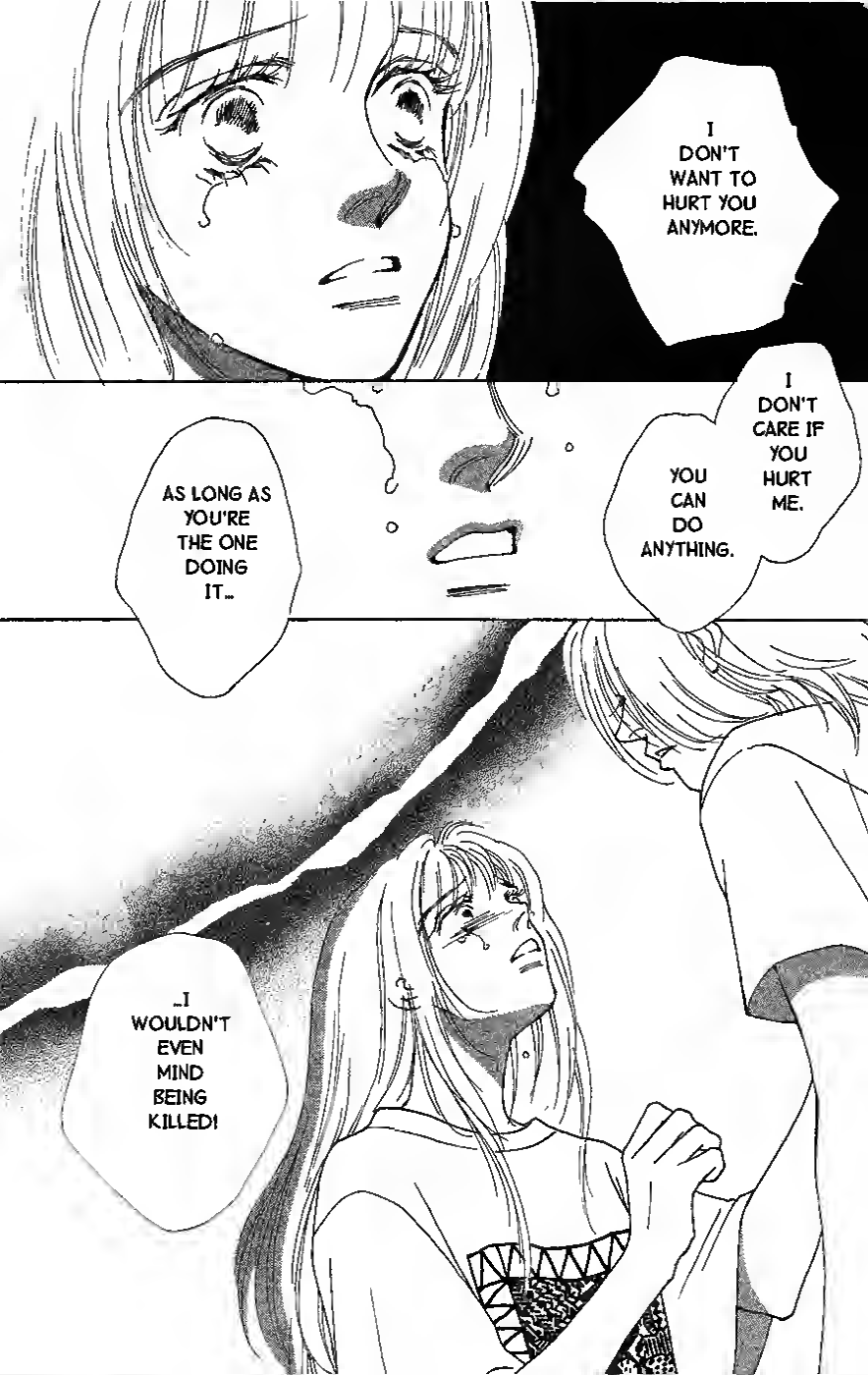
I TOLD YOU IT'S BECAUSE I DON'T HAVE ANYTHING HERE.
IF YOU REALLY DON'T WANT ME HERE,
THEN THAT'S FINE.
WHO CARES ABOUT THAT!
I DON'T CARE IF I SLEEP ON THE FLOOR.
DON'T BE SILLY. IT'S ONLY ONE NIGHT.
I WON'T SAY ANYTHING ANYMORE.
I WON'T BE A NUISANCE.
NO!
DON'T LEAVE ME ALONE-NOT EVEN FOR ONE MINUTE OR ONE SECOND.

KIRA, I'M BEGGING YOU.
I'M A GUY, TOO.
PLEASE... JUST STAY WITH ME TONIGHT.
I CAN'T KEEP MY COOL UNDER THESE CIRCUM-STANCES.

YOU KNOW HOW MUCH I WANT YOU.
NO MATTER WHAT PROMISES I MAKE ...
I'M REALLY NO DIFFERENT FROM YOUR STEPFATHER.

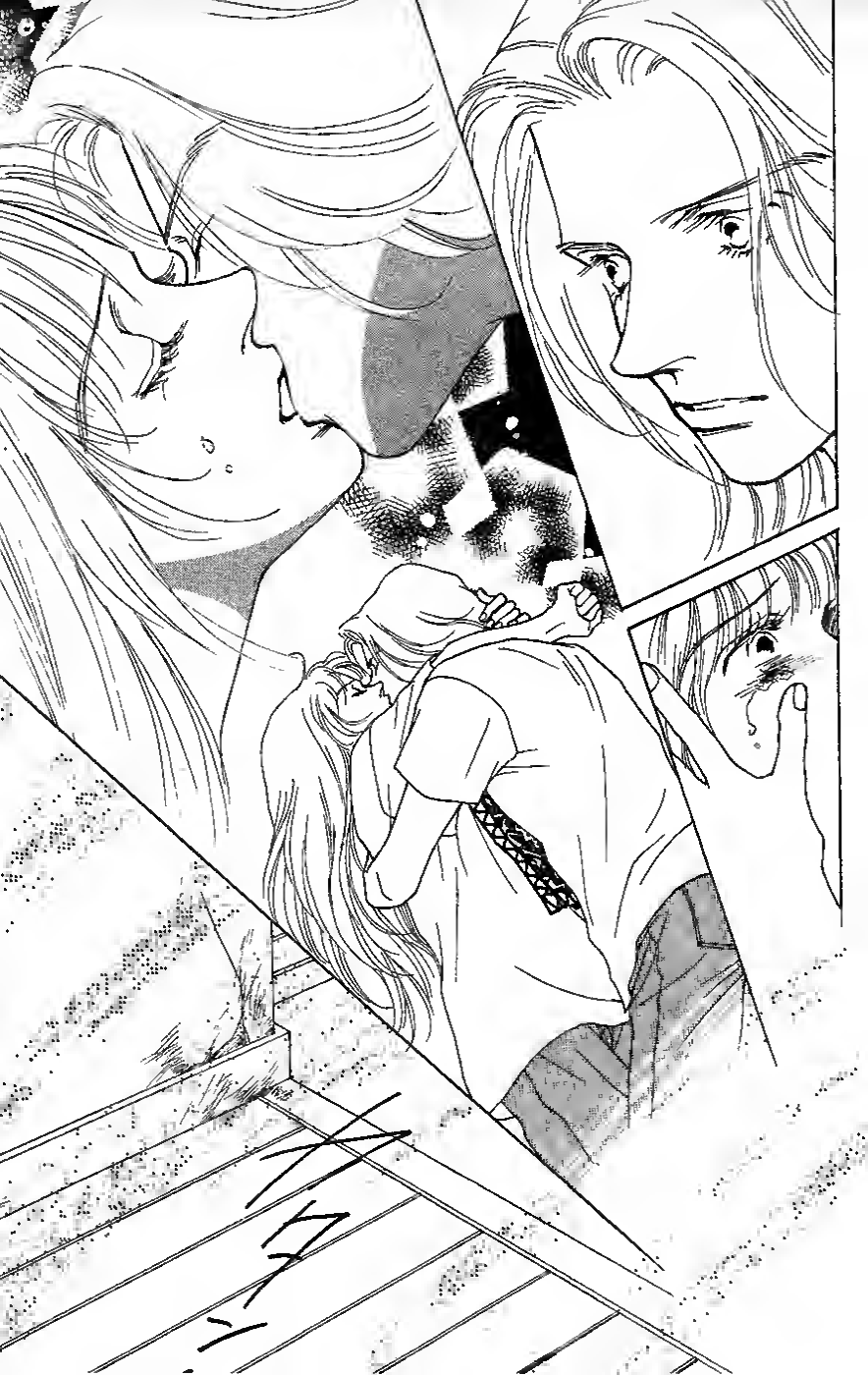
IT'S OKAY.
GO AHEAD.
YOU CAN DO WHATEVER YOU WANT.
WH... WHAT ARE YOU SAYING?

HOW CAN WE? IT'S NOT THAT SIMPLE.
THAT'S NOT IT! AS LONG AS IT'S WITH YOU, I DON'T CARE WHAT WE DO.
YOU'RE CRAZY! YOU'RE PROBABLY JUST SHAKEN UP AND CONFUSED WITH EVERY-THING THAT'S HAPPENED.
I DON'T WANT.. ..TO HEAR YOU SCREAM LIKE THAT AGAIN.
NO MATTER HOW MUCH I LOVE YOU, WHAT I'M GONNA DO ISN'T MUCH DIFFERENT FROM WHAT HE DID.
BECAUSE.. ..I'M DIRTY?
GIVE ME A BREAK!


I DON'T WANT TO HURT YOU ANYMORE.
I DON'T CARE IF YOU HURT ME.
YOU CAN DO ANYTHING.
AS LONG AS YOU'RE THE ONE DOING IT...
...I WOULDN'T EVEN MIND BEING KILLED!

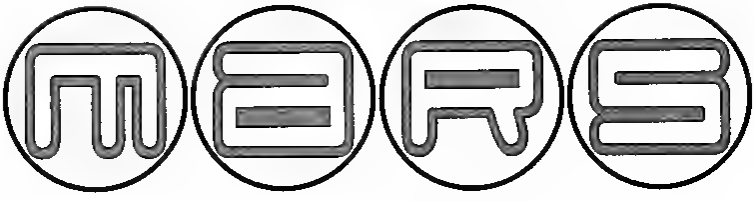
EVERYONE'S GONNA DIE SOMEDAY.
THIS WORLD IS CRAZY ANYWAY!
I DON'T CARE ABOUT RULES.
I DON'T CARE WHAT HAPPENS TO THE WORLD.
NO ONE UNDERSTANDS ME ANYWAY!
I DON'T EVEN WANT TO UNDERSTAND MYSELF.

I JUST WANT TO BE WITH YOU, THAT'S ALL.



TO BE CONTINUED

Coming Soon...



Volume Ten

Now that Rei and Kira are an "official" couple, Kira experiences a refreshing taste of freedom for the first time in her life. She is finally able to leave her troubled past behind and give in to a newfound joy. Soon, they find themselves at one of life's major crossroads. The two must decide how school and work will play into their future. Kira decides to take a job in order to secure her independence, while Rei contemplates quitting school in order to support Kira and become a respectable member of society. Just when you think you have your future all mapped out, love enters the picture and changes the scenery.

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